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SOCIETY

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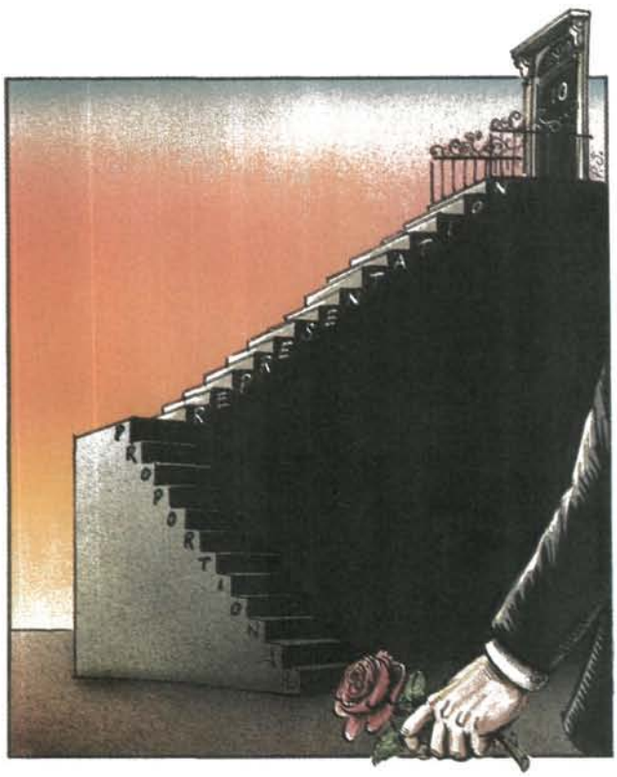
Labour can win



Labour can win. But first they must become the party of democracy and make proportional representation *the* central issue. A new opinion poll shows the public knows it. Will Labour Listen?

E L Doctorow: Gangsterdom of the spirit

The Tamil refugees Britain sent back to be tortured

Sir Michael Levey on Thatcher's museums; R W Johnson on her universities

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Heads you lose, tails they win.

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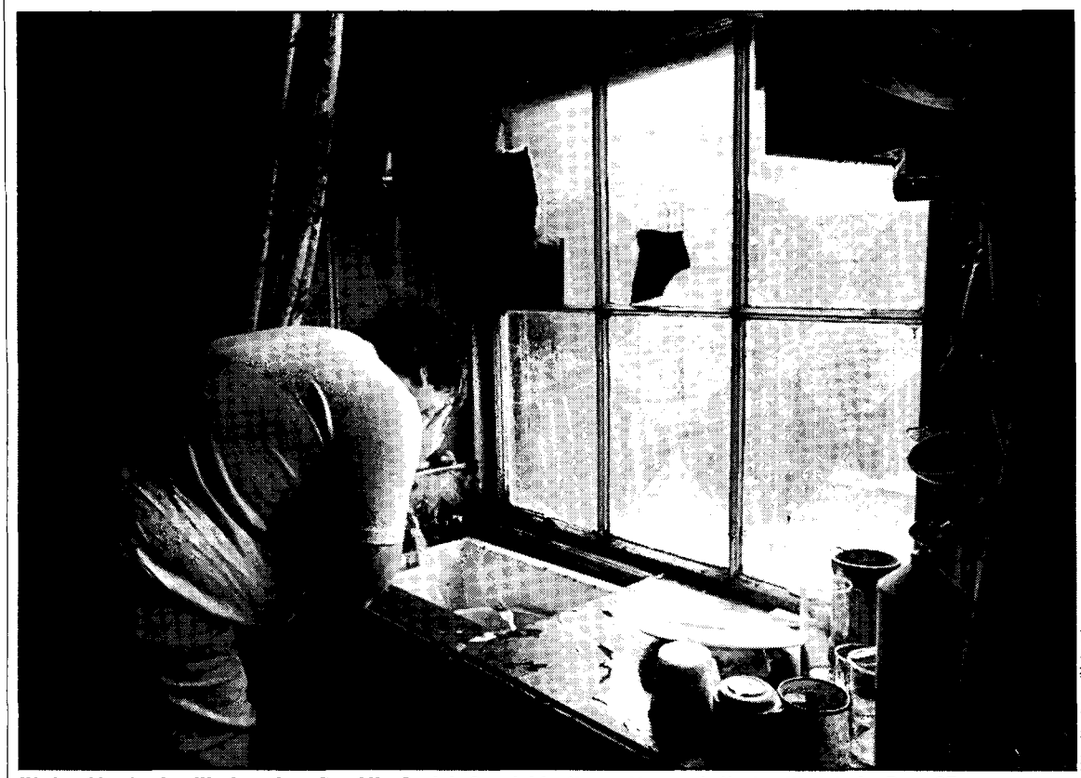

Mike Abrahams/Network

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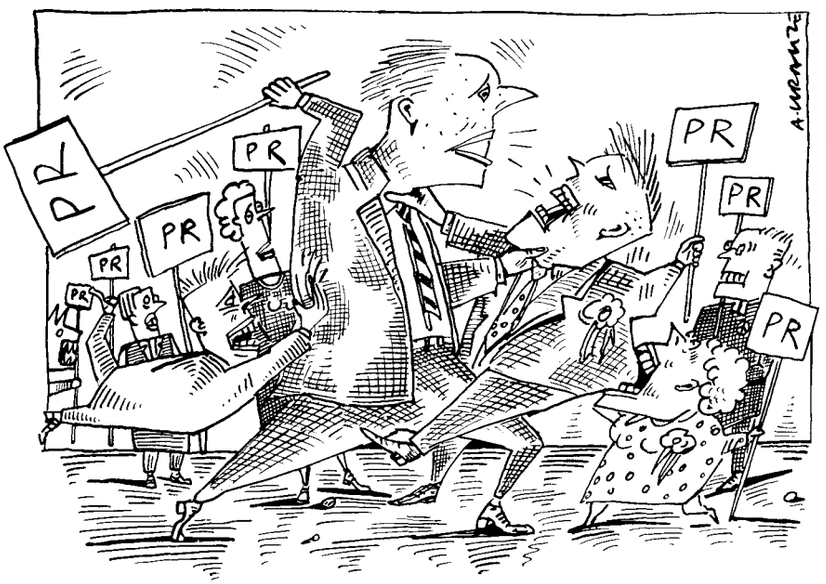
EDITORIAL

Target practice

The evidence is that electoral reform is more and more in Labour's best interests. But will Labour Learn?



Andrzej Krauze

On present form, if David Owen issued the Sermon on the Mount under his own name, peace and purity of heart would be even less in evidence among his political opponents than they are now. But he can get it right on occasion; and just as Labour was wrong to reject "one person, one vote" as the basis for its internal democracy in the early 1980s, so too the party would be wrong—self-destructively so—not to recognise that proportional representation is an idea whose time is long overdue.

Hopes for an anti-Tory electoral pact, centred specifically on electoral reform, seem to have been killed stone dead. Neil Kinnock and Paddy Ashdown have staked their parties' political futures on going it alone in 1991-92, and now even the Greens, who probably stand to gain more from the idea than anyone else, won't buy it. Still, should Labour agree at next week's party conference to consider electoral reform seriously, the party will open up the political space for a genuine anti-Tory, pro-democracy front. Every party, except the Tories, could be pressing for electoral reform at the next election; democracy would emerge as *the* election issue; and the government's shameful record would come under concerted attack. Any Tory attempts to defend the status quo would stand exposed as the arrogant defence of narrow self-interest.

Labour's present line on electoral reform is not, of course, unmoved by self-interest, but Labour MPs and members are increasingly aware, as Labour MP Dale Campbell Savours argues on page 9, that first-past-the-post elections are heavily weighted in favour of the Tories.

There are perhaps three residual obstacles to change in Labour thinking: the idea that PR is a "centrist" issue, the view that to embrace it would be a sign of "defeatism", and Roy Hattersley. The first is understandable, but unthinking; it largely stems from the fact that electoral reform in the recent past has naturally been the provenance of centre parties. But its new prominence in Britain results from a worldwide interest in political emancipation, evident here in the revival of republicanism and demands for more radical democracy from Charter 88, Scots and Welsh radicals, and the Greens. Moreover, the idea of citizen democracy was central to British socialism in its early days and, more specifically, the pre-war Labour Party was committed to PR. Dr Owen may be for it now; but so too are (to take a diverse leftish sample) Anthony Barnett and Robin Cook, Sara Parkin and Clare Short.

These aren't necessarily names which will convince Neil Kinnock, who is quite properly anxious on the defeatist point. But perhaps the poll data will. On the past record, PR isn't a high-profile issue with the public; a majority don't know the first thing about it; and few people, even among Alliance voters, felt aggrieved by the evidently "unfair" 1987 election result. But recent surveys indicate that the public, perhaps provoked by the spectacular injustice of the recent Euro-election, could shift decisively on the issue. Three weeks ago, an NOP/*Independent* poll found a 58 per cent majority for PR. And today's MORI poll for the Electoral Reform Society suggests that the shift could be decisively in Labour's interest. Nearly half the electorate know what PR is about (46 per cent); among them, some 5.5 per cent non-Labour voters say they would switch to Labour if the party declared for PR. That represents a pro-Labour swing of just under 3 per cent across the electorate as a whole.

There is more good news for Labour. These voters who know about PR tend to belong to a crucial target group Labour strategists have already identified: they tend to be middle-class, middle-aged centre party or Green voters who live in the south. Forget defeatism. If Labour committed itself boldly to PR as a matter of principle and campaigned as the party of democracy, it could take the hegemonic high ground in 1991-92 and, at a conservative estimate, double the 3 per cent swing in marginal seats. With the centre probably in continuing disarray and tactical voting at least as great as in 1987, Labour could emerge as the only viable anti-Tory force in dozens of such seats. We calculate that the commitment to electoral reform could on its own make some 80 of Labour's "target" seats winnable.

All Labour has to do this year is to keep the question open by agreeing to a composite resolution which urges the NEC to investigate the *possibility* of change. That's modest enough. But it gives the party (and Hattersley) a year's grace. To refuse to do so little would be shameful. It would show Labour's leaders up as conservative politicians who don't trust the people they wish to serve. They ought not to be surprised if those people, in turn, refused to trust them.

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Shirley was right

If the SDP can't see what future it has, this is in part because, as Shirley Williams once said, it has no history. At this year's conference the thoroughly modern party that has made a virtue of political virginity sounded like a borough council in 1957. Then, as now, the "End of Ideology" had been declared from across the Atlantic. What can this mean? As historian Robert Skidelsky, the last of the SDP intellectuals, asked a fringe meeting: if ideology and socialism are dead, is their offspring, social democracy, dead too? "It's a troubling thought," he admitted, though he forgot his trouble when he told members the next day that their party's future was as the intellectual of British politics.

The party with no history has, until now, celebrated the freedom this gave members and leader. They, like David Owen, could judge issues on their merits. Many still profess a dislike of politics, preferring "common sense" and "problem solving". The price they pay is that they have nothing to sustain them when the tide is against them. Faced with the same problem the SLD has turned to its past, leaving the Greens to claim the future. But unlike the Greens in bleaker days, the SDP has no political mission, and no local heroes or martyrs—just the big ones on top, determined to stay there.

The members make no claim to a greater share of their party's political life. John Martin, the man who made his bid for the presidency with this point, was jeered, and the present incumbent, John Cartwright, cheered as an heroic failure when he told members they would have to make their own local deals, as he had been rebuffed nationally by all. Yet Rosemary Brownlow, the woman held up by Owen two years ago as a representative of all that was finest in local membership, concedes that their local deal with the SLD in Blyth Valley has been pointless. Labour has surged back on the council, and those who once voted SDP now say: "But we've *always* voted Labour." That's the power of history.

Cambodian posturing

"Nobody wants Pol Pot back," says a Foreign Office spokesman. In this he is in agreement with the people of Cambodia—every report coming out of Cambodia as the Vietnamese troops withdraw emphasises the universal fear that the Khmer Rouge may return.

For the last ten years the British government has campaigned, supposedly on behalf of the Cambodian people, for the removal of the Vietnamese troops because "the Cambodian people must be allowed to decide for themselves" what government they have. The fact that the Vietnamese invaded in order to depose a regime that killed 20 per cent of the population in three years is a secondary consideration. The UN has refused to recognise the present government of Hun Sen. Instead the UN seat has been held by the resistance alliance—which includes the Khmer Rouge. "Cut through the bullshit," advises the Foreign Office spokesman, but fails to follow his own good advice, describing the patently simple issue of the UN seat as "highly complex".

Although the Foreign Office grants that the removal of the Vietnamese troops is what it has always wanted, it says it is concerned that there is no verification. There is no verification because the Foreign Office did not send any observers to verify. Until this weekend, Hun Sen has refused to allow UN observers, because the UN recognises Pol Pot.

The main reason for the current mess is America's inability to come to terms with its defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese. Yet the Foreign Office spokesman knows where to place the blame: "Stop posturing, Hun Sen, cut through your disagreements and think of the people of Cambodia." A refusal to negotiate with the Khmer Rouge "a posture"? It is time the British government took its own rhetoric seriously and put the Cambodian people first.

H_2Odium

There are few examples in commercial history of products failing solely because of bad advertising. It may be that the Ford Edsel didn't sell because the name was wrong. Strand cigarettes certainly failed because the slogan, "You're never alone with a Strand," suggested the product was for lonely men. But usually the failure of an advertising campaign suggests that something is wrong with the goods.

An *Observer*/Harris poll showed last week that the government's water privatisation campaign was actually *deterring* five times more people from buying water shares than it was encouraging. But don't shoot the copywriter: the political handling of the affair has been farcical. The first ads, from the water authorities, allegedly had nothing to do with privatisation, but were simply to raise our "awareness" of water (while we were simultaneously urged us to cut back on it). Now the government's ads are trying to persuade us to invest in a company whose only product is to be the subject of multiple prosecutions at the hands of the EC.

By now, little short of mass hypnosis could market water to the British. But there are still some selling points. An accurate campaign could point out that water shares will be a bargain, since the government will set a price that guarantees an instant profit. It could also stress the valuable land owned by water authorities, especially in the south, which could be sold off to developers, for a tidy profit. And it could remind us that shareholders will be protected from price rises compelled by the enforcement of EC water standards because these will be passed directly on to the customer. Of course this message might irritate non-shareholders. But the government wouldn't allow mere political considerations to affect the workings of market forces, would it?

Protect and survive

Thursday is Green Shopping Day. It is also the anniversary of Mrs Thatcher's green conversion on the road to the Royal Society dinner. But as environment-friendly citizens flock to the shops (a quintessentially 1980s' form of political activity) to save the dwindling Amazonian rainforests and repair the Antarctic ozone hole, they should not forget that their own countryside is still vanishing fast. This week both the Royal Society for Nature Conservation and a green alliance of nine pressure groups against roads have gone on the attack. Roads, development, urban sprawl, and farming practices are all leading to one end. Only 5 per cent of English lowlands still harbour common plants and animals. During the last ten years, 10 per cent of Shropshire's still unspoiled habitats have gone forever. Fourteen per cent of the country's supposedly protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest have been damaged since 1984. Protection for the countryside has never been feebler: as the roads lobby gathers momentum and county-level strategic planning is weakened by government changes, the Nature Conservancy Council is to be split up. More incentives to help farmers use traditional methods which encourage wildlife, better public transport and coordinated planning are the only way to save the countryside. Mrs Thatcher, of all people, ought to realise that, like charity, greenery starts at home.

Televisual treat of the week was provided by Krystyna Bradbury, fundamentalist hardliner in the Dorset Green Party. BBC1's *On The Record* filmed Ms Bradbury, *driving*, alone, in her large Volvo estate to a bottle bank, there to deposit half a dozen empties carried thither in a Laura Ashley bag. Maybe the Green revolution won't be the spartan affair we've been led to expect.

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LETTERS

Inventing what we read

It is startling to read Sue Lees's response (Letters, 22 September) to my article "The beast in man" (8 September). Some issues, I know, are so emotive that we cannot help but invent what we read. But in every sentence?

I did not deny that sexual violence, rape, battery, child abuse, murder, are predominantly perpetrated by men. I asserted it. I did not deny that men have attempted to ignore these crimes. I asserted it. I did not deny the importance of feminists' raising the issue of men's violence. I asserted it. I did not lump all forms of violence together as the same. I said that violence, like masculinity, is *not* a "unitary phenomenon". That is precisely why simply pointing to the fact that most violence is committed by men does not thereby explain it.

The non sequiturs Lees sees in my argument reside only in her own. She begins by correctly pointing out that I "cast doubt on the *necessary* link between violence and masculinity". By the fourth paragraph, however, she is attributing to me the position that they are "not connected". She claims that it does not follow that violence in lesbian relationships weakens the link between violence and masculinity, but it does, as I suggest, cast doubt on the *necessary* link between violence and masculinity.

Lees's letter, sadly, is itself symptomatic of the refusal to embrace the complexity which my article was addressing. Can feminists really afford to ignore the question of why some men resort to violence and other men do not?

Lynne Segal
Middlesex Polytechnic
Queensway
Enfield

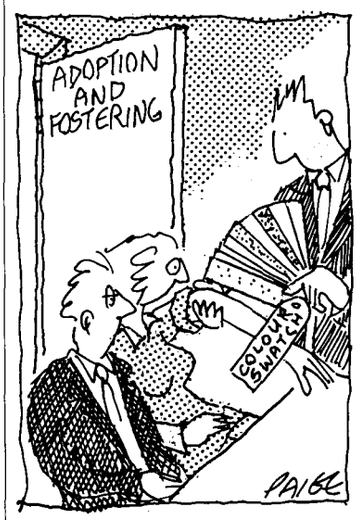
Personal violence

While I am pleased to see a prominent feminist trying to come to terms with the realities of personal violence ("The beast in man", 8 September), I have to say I am astonished that Lynne Segal stops short at violence in lesbian households. I appreciate the need to counter the absurd sentimentalisation of lesbian, as opposed to heterosexual, relationships, in modern feminism, but she would have strengthened the case she was making by drawing on well authenticated cases of women's violence in the home against babies and children, against aged dependents and against male partners.

I have myself experienced distressing personal violence from my ex-wife and I know of male friends who have been assaulted by their wives (one of whom threw a sharp kitchen knife at her husband, missing his head by only a few inches). All I want to say, really, is that under the influence of stress or strong emotions human beings may turn to violence, whatever their gender (age, race, class, etc). Agreed, the statistics show that it is overwhelmingly men who do so; and so as a society we should examine urgently the reasons for this. But we should also chuck overboard simplistic equations of the "maleness = violence" variety.

Name and address supplied

Bringing up baby



After all the mainstream press hysteria about the adoption of black children, what a relief it was to read in *NSS*, "...it is an unpalatable truth that we are a racist society and that black children will, in general, be better prepared for it in black families" ("Holding the baby", 1 September).

Interestingly, the reaction of some of the *NSS* readers (Letters, 15 September) is not so different from that of the readers of the popular press. Neither can accept that the majority of white British people can be racist. Beneath the outrage about (white) couples "suffering under the existing situation" or the "traumatic experience for any child... removed from a loving (white) mother substitute", lies a popular white indignation: how dare we, who have ruled much of this world, be challenged about our potential to bring up all children. The righteous "civilising" spirit that built the empire can't accept the evidence that white British people can and do damage black children in their care. I hope that the *NSS* will not get caught up in this hysteria but will stand firm against individual, collective and institutional racism.

Josna Pankhania
Address supplied

Road to addiction

Geoffrey Pearson's article about drugs ("The street connection", 15 September) makes some interesting points but I found some of it incomprehensible. Who, for instance, ever advocated that drugs should be left to "the benign nature of market forces"? This is a travesty of a line of serious thought that has been developing for many years.

Pearson advocates measures against "low-level dealers" but fails to mention that these are nearly all addicts themselves. Because of our present drug policies they feel forced to sell drugs and create new addicts in order to survive. It is difficult to see what can be done about that through the rhetoric with which western governments obscure the truth. It needs a change of policy, but first it needs a change of attitude. If those dependent on drugs were allowed controlled, regular supplies until such time as they could give them up, most of them would not be pushers and many young people would be saved from addiction.

Dr Ann Dally
Devonshire Place
London W1

Israeli brutality

We, the undersigned, have just returned from a 15-day investigation of the educational situation in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. During our visit we were shocked and angered by the brutal repression of the unarmed Palestinian population by the Israeli military authorities, of which the concerted assault on education was only one facet. During our visit, 20 Palestinians were shot dead, the majority under 18 years old, and five were deported despite UN condemnations.

Thousands of school students are barred from attending school, and all five Palestinian universities are still closed after nearly two years. Together with the persecution and harassment of students, teachers and lecturers, these closures represent an unparalleled attempt to suppress an entire generation's right to education.

We call on the British government and the international community to condemn publicly the continued closures and to insist on the immediate reopening of all Palestinian education institutions.

Pat Hawkes (NUT), Paul Bennett (NATFHE), Rebecca Packwood (NUS), Bryan Gallagher (AUT), Elana Dallas (WUS), Matthew Carr, Caroline Colgan, Alison Denham, Roy Edwards, Mike Hayes, John Hopkins, Victoria Keens, Nigel Parry, Graham Torr, Graham Usher, Kym Winter

Fatal attraction

In your issue of 4 August, you published a highly critical account by Mr Flather of my work as chief education officer in London ("Fatal attraction"). It contains so many inaccuracies that it would be tedious to attempt to correct them in this letter. I think it necessary, however, to put on record the extent of the factual errors in the article, and draw attention to two in particular, by way of "specimen" examples: the gross misrepresentation of Wandsworth's magnet proposals, and the fact that testing arrangements in Croydon were not mine but were introduced under the auspices of the National Foundation for Educational Research and made a valuable contribution to the effectiveness of the service.

What is particularly distasteful about the article is its highly personalised nature. I have never, to my knowledge, met Mr Flather. His article appears to be a pastiche based on understandably unattributed conversations and at least one uncritical "lift" from previous articles. His article would have commanded more respect if he had had the decency to talk to me directly, to give me an opportunity to respond. I would also have expected you to have described the political

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credentials of the author, so that your readers might understand the bias which contributed to such an unpleasant piece of writing, for which I feel an apology is due.

D Naismith
Fairfax Road
Teddington
Middlesex

New kid on the block

I am bemused to find myself being used as a football in your lively correspondence on the state of the *Sunday Telegraph*. Edward Pearce complains ("The perils of Perry, 8 September) that the inclusion of an article by me did nothing to "balance" the *Sunday Telegraph*'s right-wing bias. The article in question was a profile of the Gatecrasher Balls founder Eddie Davenport—a largely non-political piece. In any case concern for balance is strange coming from Pearce. When the right-wing National Association for Freedom was set up in the 1970s Pearce became editor of their organ, *Free Nation*. He did not ensure its political balance. Indeed it would have been absurd to have expected him to. Similarly he was happy to write an article for *New Agenda*, a magazine published by the Federation of Conservative Students, when I was its editor and its right-wing bias incontrovertible.

Nicholas Bagnall then proceeds to rub salt in my wounds ("Letters", 22 September) by pointing out that my byline did not appear on the Davenport profile. At the time Bagnall assured me that this was merely because Profiles were normally carried anonymously, he sent me £600 and all seemed right with the world. Now he says my name was removed because Frank Johnson was "so doubtful" about it. This is rather feeble. Plenty of newspapers and magazines have run articles of mine with my byline (including the *New Statesman*). The *Sunday Telegraph* should have the self-confidence to do the same without making craven excuses to Mr Pearce when responding to his hypocritical objections to my right-wing Conservative views.

Still I must sign off now to fix up hotel accommodation in Brighton for the Labour Party conference, for which I have been allocated a press pass. If the Labour Party is prepared to recognise my journalistic bona fides it seems odd that Pearce and Bagnall should feel such anxiety. As a new kid on the block of "shrill Conservative" journalists I find longer-standing tenants like Pearce and Bruce Anderson (Letters, 15 September) curious role models. By trading abusive anecdotes they show more in common with each other than either would care to admit.

Harry Phibbs
Sutherland Street
London SW1

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

● Brian and Lynne Donkin of Butterknowle, Durham, applied in July for a telephone line for their new business. By 8 August they were still without a phone but BT had sent a bill for £4,320.03.—*Daily Telegraph* (R A England)

● Workmen made a double blunder when they began repairing the roof of the wrong house—then set fire to it with a blow torch. Owners Stephen and Carol Finch arrived home to find their two-bedroomed bungalow wrecked.

The builders responsible said [it] was "an act of God". —*Daily Mirror* (George Moor)

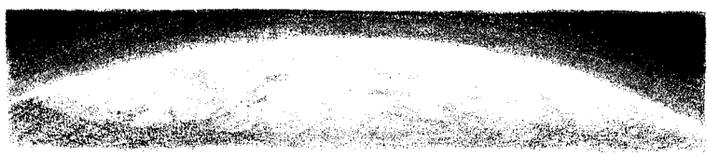
● The quick-thinking gran smelled a rat when the tricksters called at her home saying she had won a lottery.

They gave Phyllis a £10 note and then asked her to write a thank-you note. As she started writing, one asked to use the loo. "He didn't pull the chain so I knew he was up to something suspicious," she said.—*Daily Star* (George Moor)

● A reluctant juror cost the taxpayer £7,000 yesterday after telling a judge: "This is just not my scene."

The young man—described by the Old Bailey judge as "the black juror with a funny haircut"—failed to turn up on the second day of a kidnap case—*Daily Mirror* (Nick Thomas)

● The Piccadilly Line would like to apologise to its customers for the disruptive service yesterday. This was caused by an attempted suicide, a suspected bomb and a fight on the track.—Noticeboard at Finsbury Park tube station (Sue Matthias)



The flash we're referring to isn't your common or garden phosphate-stuffed, non-bio-degradable floor cleaner.

We've just invested eleven billion pounds of your money in a brand new delivery system.

It starts deep down in the sea, which, let's face it, is one of the greenest places around, then it thrusts up through the stratosphere and into space, keeping our atmosphere entirely free of the harmful exhaust chemicals that you'd expect from, say, a diesel lorry.

we'd like to clean it all up in a flash.

Then our delivery vehicle drops back down, without harming the precious ozone layer, towards its destination in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, where it cleans up in a flash what are generally agreed to be some of the most heavily polluted areas on the planet.

And that will leave you free to get on with the business of consuming as many phosphate-free, ozone-friendly, lead-reduced products as is humanely possible.

As the eighties draw to a close, what a confusing and difficult world we find ourselves in.
Words like "Deforestation," "Greenhouse Effect" and "Dirty Water" are on everyone's lips.
It's hard to know what to do about all this worrying environmental news.
That's why we at Tory HQ have decided to keep things simple and clean and do absolutely bugger all.
More than that we've embarked on a campaign to destroy public transport, dismantle public healthcare, and promote public ignorance by smashing State Education.
OZONE FRIENDLY
OTHER PEOPLE. IF WE COULD JUST GET SHOT OF THEM. HOW MUCH NICER A PLACE OUR WORLD WOULD BE.
PHOSPHATE FREE
To this end we've introduced a totally new concept: the City Technology College, or C.T.C. for short.
While we've been cutting back on Science and Technology and Art and Design Education for 90% of the school population, we've set up a number of élite institutions around the country with lavish public funds.
We're even planning to open a "Green" C.T.C. so that tomorrow's corporate raider can experience a whole new sense of spiritual 'one'ness without harming the ozone layer. Now that's what we call 'Natural Selection'
79·25·9·89
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DIARY

Sean French

Mrs Thatcher has often proclaimed that her ambition is to kill off socialism as a political force. However, it may come to seem in retrospect that the real casualty of her idiosyncratic brand of neo-liberalism was not socialism at all, but the old-fashioned authoritarian conservatism of her own party.

One of the problems facing the left-liberal press in Britain, apart from increased competition, is that they don't seem entirely sure of their response to the current political situation.

If you want to encounter authentic rage about what is happening to Britain, you have to turn to the *Sunday Telegraph*. The current advertisements for the paper state that while other Sunday newspapers have grown fatter, the *Sunday Telegraph* has grown sharper, and to some extent this is true.

The former editor, Peregrine Worsthorne, has had his control of the paper reduced to the "Sunday Comment" section, which amounts to just three pages. I suspect that Worsthorne has now decided that he has nothing to lose. He is the last truly Tory editor left in British journalism and if he's going to go down, he'll do it with all guns blazing.

Assessments of what is happening to Britain, which ought to concentrate on general economic and social changes, tend to be sidetracked by the authoritarian and nationalist instincts of the prime minister.

Recent political events have seemed to show that the population is more liberal than Mrs Thatcher. Race, for example, seems no longer to be the potent rallying call it once was. And it may well be suspected that Mrs Thatcher's motivation for cancelling the proposed sex survey by the Health Education Council was because of the disparity it might reveal between the public's view of sexual morality and her own government's carefully nurtured mythology on the subject.

It is against this drift that Peregrine Worsthorne is fighting and in recent weeks the ideological attacks have been surprisingly systematic.

His columns are now the only ones in Fleet Street that make no concession whatever to notions of balance or representing a spectrum of opinion. Things are too serious for that, he might argue. It would be like asking a samizdat publication during the darkest days of Stalinism to give space to government spokesmen.

His commentators now tend to be from the extreme right and they write with a persecuted air. Only they are permitted to say the unsayable and in recent weeks they have said it, on race, even on the subject of Nazism. Roger Scruton, editor of the *Salisbury Review*, wrote an article on the editorial page this week headlined "Why heterosexism is not a vice" during the course of which he lamented: "Probably the Comment pages of the *Sunday Telegraph* provide the last remaining place where you can criticise homosexuality in print—the last place where toleration will be extended to the heterosexist."

This is something of an exaggeration. I suspect that Scruton would find that his views would still find support in the *Sun* but he has a point. Even the changes that have been happening at the *Sun* in recent weeks probably reflect Rupert Murdoch's notions of the growing liberalisation of the paper's readers.

As I've said before in this column, Roger Scruton is the author of an excellent *Dictionary of Political Thought* and in that book's entry under "law and morality" he talks of the liberal conception that "law is essentially public, whereas morality has large private areas into which the law can intrude only by violating individual rights or freedoms." Scruton contrasts this with "thinkers who do not feel the liberal confidence in the absolute independence of society and state, may think of the state and its law as the guardian of an entire social order and of all the values, whether moral, religious or political, which that social order requires".

An interesting conflict, but Scruton's own exploration of it in the *Sunday Telegraph* was rabble-rousing nonsense. The basic argument was that gays don't care about our society because they don't have children and they seemed to be responsible for everything that is wrong with Britain. Adam Mars-Jones, for example, the short-story writer and film critic of the *Independent*, was accused (without evidence) of holding "our society and its decencies to scorn".

More startling still, gays "injected our country with the languorous pacifism which was such an encouragement to Hitler". Some of us might have thought the right-wing appeasers were to blame but clearly gays now ought to have the second world war on their conscience. And what about acid rain and the ozone layer?

Some form of liberalism has undoubtedly triumphed. But I hope the *Sunday Telegraph* survives, to remind us of the odiousness of what it has replaced.

Perhaps the first liberal individualists were the hippies. Timothy Leary used to argue that the crucial fact about the baby-boom generation was that they had been "demand-fed", according to the child-rearing theories of Dr Benjamin Spock. That is, they were brought up expecting their appetites to be satisfied as a matter of right.

This is a suggestive way of re-evaluating the last quarter century of our history. For example, Jim Morrison's famous call, "We want the world, and we want it now", sounds less like a revolutionary slogan than the wail of a child's tantrum. And the mass movements of the sixties start to look like nothing more than the demand that the appetites of a generation be instantly gratified.

Now the generation has grown older and has more money with which to spoil itself. I've recently seen advertisements in the newspapers offering a four-day trip to New York to see the Rolling Stones at Shea Stadium for the knockdown price of £599.

Which reminds me of another Rolling Stone, the magazine, which was among the first organisations to link the counter-culture with consumerism. I read in the current issue of *Vanity Fair* that after many years of excess *Rolling Stone*'s founder and editor, Jann Wenner, has discovered the wonders of healthy living. He now has special vegetarian meals prepared by his cook at home and then taken by limo to his Fifth Avenue office, for all the world like a kid having his lunchbox dropped off at school by his Mom.

ROGER WODDIS

Bob's your uncle

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, who has suggested that Anglicans might accept papal authority in a united Church, is meeting the Pope in Rome this Friday

The Church's one foundation,
That once appeared so firm,
Is causing consternation
And making Paisley squirm.
The thought of going Roman
Divides the English mob,
For some revere the Showman,
And some love Uncle Bob.

By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
The English Church may wonder
Why Pope John Paul knows best:
He fears the dreadful sequel,
If gays were not restrained
From thinking they are equal,
And women were ordained.

Before the Reformation
The good would not endorse
The sin of fornication,
The evil of divorce.
O happy disco dancers!
They couldn't give a toss
Which doctor knows the answers,
Or which of them is boss.

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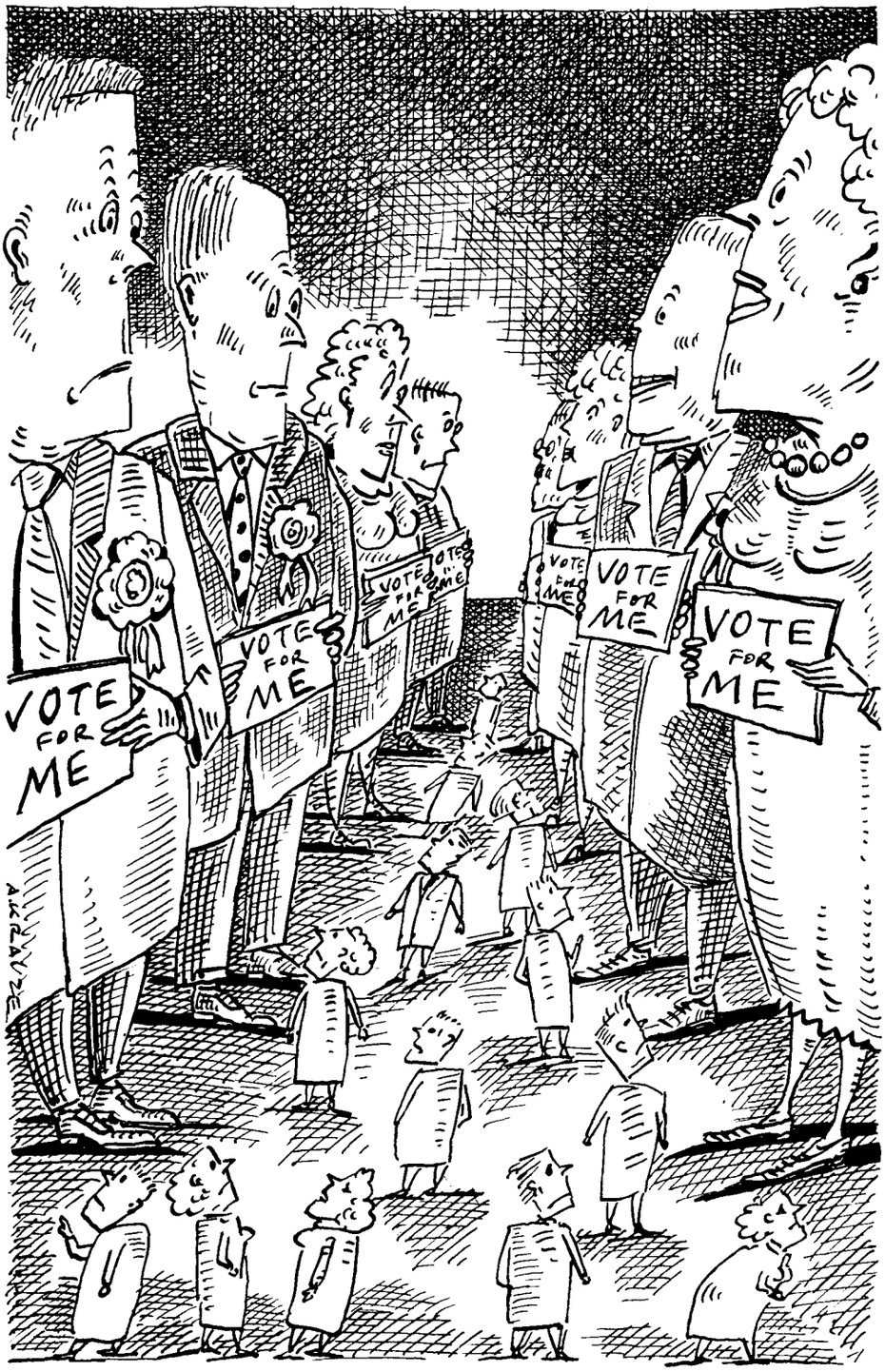
PR or bust

Labour MPs are turning to electoral reform. Dale Campbell Savours has devised a form of PR that would give them the edge



Andrzej Krauze

Over the past nine months, I have interviewed 125 Labour MPs, more than half the parliamentary party, about electoral reform. In all, 100 were in favour of changing the first-past-the post elections to Westminster, eight agreed in principle (but didn't regard it a priority), and 17 opposed any change. But almost all the Labour MPs prepared to consider change insisted on retaining single-member constituencies.

This dramatic change results from a recognition of electoral realities. To gain a simple majority of one over all the other parties, Labour must gain 97 extra seats, of which 34 have Conservative majorities of over 6,000 (including figures of 11,736 in Watford, 11,781 in Clwyd North West, 11,783 in Waveney). Unless the Conservative vote dissolves, the percentage point shift Labour needs to win the Watfords and Waveneys is nearly 20 per cent.

Labour's standing in the opinion polls has risen significantly, but the party is nowhere near this sort of shift in voting intentions. With or without deals, the centre parties and the Greens may well achieve enough support to split the anti-Tory vote again, as in 1983 and 1987, thereby continuing the Tories' long dominance under the first-past-the-post system. Further, the long-term social and electoral trends look increasingly unfavourable. Boundary changes after 1992 will almost certainly produce a net shift of 20 seats to the Conservatives.

Britain needs a modern electoral system which removes the strong Conservative bias, which doesn't waste millions of votes, and yet which focuses the electorate's attention on a choice between alternative parties of government. The debate about electoral reform has been artificially polarised between defenders of the status quo, who stress the merits of single-member constituencies and majority governments, and purists who insist on maximum proportionality between votes and seats, whatever the implications for government.

Both sides, in fact, have good points which ought to be met by reform. Under a fair electoral system, the major parties should win seats in broad proportion to their votes; and voters for minority parties should not be denied adequate representation or further influence over electoral outcomes after they've cast their first "wasted" vote. The system ought not to encourage the fragmentation of parties, and voters should be encouraged to focus on choosing a viable government. In addition, there are strong grounds for choosing a system which is familiar, simple to operate and easy to understand; all of which presupposes as little change in existing practice as possible.

The debate on electoral reform centres on four major systems. The *single transferable vote* (STV) and *list* systems both dispense with single-member constituencies and so destroy the links between MPs and their constituencies. In my own region, Cumbria, for example, STV would mean that five or six MPs would represent 500,000 people spread over thousands of square miles. It would weaken party discipline and could lead to the kind of political stagnation evident in the Irish Republic. The vast majority of Labour MPs are opposed to STV and I have

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Labour still has much to do

John Curtice decodes the message behind the recent polls

Labour is in better heart than for many a year. In June's Euro-election it won a nationwide election for the first time since 1974. And many a commentator has declared that Labour is now electable. But is Labour's new-found confidence really justified? Are its prospects of winning the next general election really brighter now than they were during the course of the first and second Thatcher parliaments? Or is there still a lot of work to do?

Labour has been here before in certain respects. Labour led the Conservatives in the polls for much of 1985 and 1986—by an average of seven percentage points in the early summer of 1986. The commanding lead which saw the Conservatives through the last general election campaign only emerged in March 1987, three months before Mrs Thatcher went to the polls.

But there is one striking difference this time. Labour's lead may be similar, but its own level of popularity is much higher. Throughout the summer Labour has been achieving 45 per cent in the polls—though this has slipped to 43.5 per cent in September, and to 42 per cent in last week's *Observer*/Harris poll. No poll has put Labour *below* 40 per cent since May.

In contrast no poll put Labour *above* 41 per cent in the whole of 1985 and 1986, and Labour's monthly average never exceeded the high 30s. Indeed, Labour has not done so well since the beginning of 1981 and the formation of the Liberal/SDP Alliance.

But is the government simply going through another spell of mid-term blues—with Labour as the beneficiary, after the political suicide of the Alliance?

One thing is clear. On a number of counts the government and the Conservative Party have lost their appeal in the eyes of the electorate. For example, perceptions of how well the economy is doing have taken a nose-dive.

In July Gallup found that only 15 per cent of people thought that the economy had got better in the past 12 months, while 64 per cent thought that it had got worse—a 49 per cent negative rating. In contrast a year ago just as many people thought it had got better as thought it had got worse.

Meanwhile, MORI has registered a substantial weakening of the Conservative Party's image over the past twelve months. Compared with April 1988, in July 1989, 6 per cent more people said that the Conservatives were out of touch; similarly, 6 per cent more thought that they were divided; 8 per cent less thought the party was professional in its approach; and 6 per cent less thought it understood the problems facing Britain. And on Gallup's satisfaction rating, Mrs Thatcher has slipped into the mid 30s.

But it is by no means clear that the government is any less popular than it was four years ago. Pessimism about the future of the economy was, according to MORI, as prevalent in the middle of 1985 as it is now. Meanwhile, Mrs Thatcher's personal popularity was yet lower in the beginning of 1986 than it is now. But is Labour's own appeal stronger now?

There is some evidence that it is. For example, as early as April this year—before Labour's recovery began to show through—54 per cent of people said to Gallup that Labour was "very" or "fairly" competent to manage the country's affairs, compared with 41 per cent the previous November. Forty-six per cent thought it had become more responsible compared with 29 per cent in September. And as many as 33 per cent were prepared to say in July that Labour was united, up 11 points from March—though 57 per cent still said it was divided.

But other evidence is much more equivocal. For example, a comparison of the MORI polls of April 1988 and July 1989 shows there has been no shift in the percentage who believe Labour understands the problems facing Britain. And Mr Kinnock's rating in the Gallup poll has stood between 35 and 40 per cent in recent months—whereas in 1986 it stood above 40 per cent for most of the time.

True, much of the ideological ground has moved in Labour's direction. In July's Gallup, only 19 per cent of voters wanted more nationalised industries sold off, while 36 per cent wanted some private companies nationalised. And in April 73 per cent wanted more services, even if it meant paying more in taxes—compared with 34 per cent in March 1979 on the eve of Mrs Thatcher's first election victory. But the failure of Thatcherism to install itself in popular attitudes was already clearly evident in opinion surveys before the 1987 election—but it did not stop Mrs Thatcher winning the election then.

Labour's new-found confidence is not ill-founded. But the next election is still far from a foregone conclusion. Evaluations of the Conservatives' performance in office have hit this low before. And Labour still has plenty of work to do to improve its positive appeal to the voters. Maybe the conference in Brighton next week will contribute towards achieving that task.

John Curtice is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Strathclyde

found no enthusiasm for it among Tory members.

The *list system*, which is widely used in western Europe, would give party leaders huge powers of patronage; for while electors would choose the party, the party machine would determine the order in which their MPs were elected. (More positively, it could be used to give women greater opportunity.)

An *additional member system*, like that used in West Germany, creates two classes of MPs. Most are elected for local constituencies on a first-past-the-post basis, but a minority drawn from regional lists are selected to top up the seats of otherwise under-represented parties. This seems to me to combine the worst features of first-past-the-post and list systems.

The *alternative vote* is easily the best-known of the alternatives, and has twice come close to being introduced: first, in 1917 by the Liberals (the bill was lost due to Lloyd George's personal neutrality) and then by Labour in 1931 (it was approved by a Commons majority, but rejected by the Lords). The alternative vote is equivalent to STV in a single-member constituency; existing constituencies remain, but voters rank candidates in order of preference (numbering them 1, 2, 3, etc, on the ballot paper) and candidates are eliminated until one passes 50 per cent of the ballot with first and second preferences.

But the system could allow a candidate ranked a poor third, or even fourth, on the first ballot to overtake those ranked first or second; it guarantees only the election of the least unpopular candidate, not an MP who has substantial support in their own right.

How, then, to meet the criteria for change that I have set out: greater proportionality and choice for voters, party cohesion and the prospect of stable government? After a year's work and detailed study of election results in Britain, I have devised a new system which does just that: the *supplementary vote*. Like the alternative vote, it retains single-member constituencies. Voting could not be simpler. Voters may indicate their first and second choice.

As with the alternative vote, a candidate with more than 50 per cent of votes on the first ballot is elected; if no candidate achieves a simple majority, the first two candidates only remain in the race, and second preferences for them are added to their vote. Whichever has the largest total vote wins.

The supplementary vote broadly resembles the French system of run-off elections, but doesn't need two rounds of voting on separate weeks. Voters can always vote for their preferred candidate, without worrying about wasted votes or tactical voting. But if that candidate is unlikely to make the run-off, then they have the chance to influence the final outcome. In a seat which is basically a two-party contest, they can allocate their second vote to the front-runner they like best. If the contest is three-way, they can vote for the two leading parties they prefer.

This system guarantees that the MP elected will have been one of the two frontrunners on the first ballot, and so avoids the rogue results possible with the alternative vote. If you assume that voters will want to make effective

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use of their second preference vote, it gives them the opportunity to influence that outcome while eliminating the "wasted vote" syndrome. The great majority of MPs will be elected with majority support and none will be elected against the wishes of the majority (as happens now). It preserves the relationship between MPs, their local constituencies and their local parties.

Some 141 Tory MPs sit in the Commons today who didn't obtain the votes of at least half their constituents in 1987. They provide the government with the inflated majority it needs to push through deeply unpopular policies on the NHS, water privatisation and the poll tax. This state of affairs is intolerable. If they were accountable to their constituents under a more sensitive voting system, they would possibly not be there in the first place, and certainly not after the next election. The supplementary vote would remove the prospect of such abuse of power in the future.

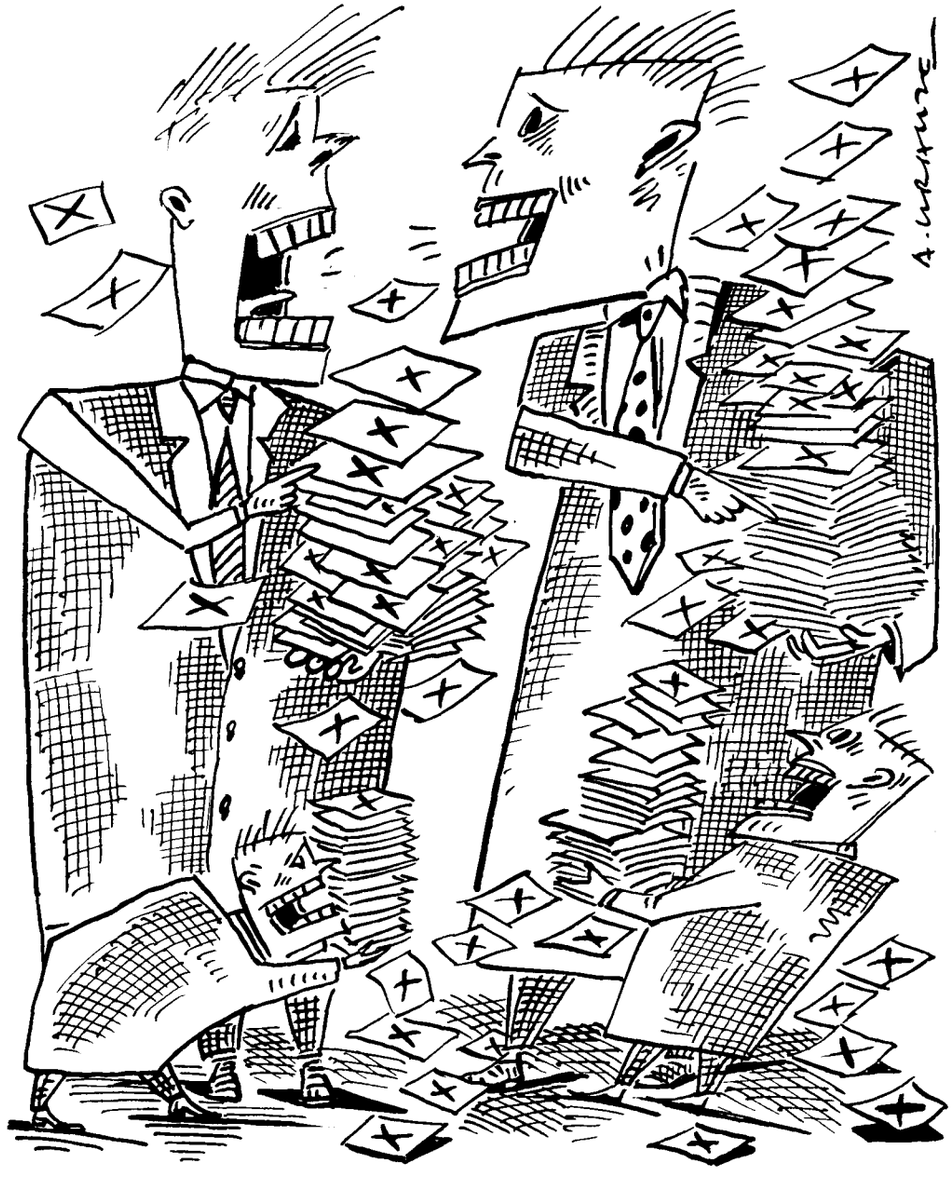
But how would it work in practice? I have examined computer models of what would happen in every constituency in mainland Britain under five different scenarios of shifts in voting patterns. The five scenarios are set out in the table (page 12). The first column shows that even on the most optimistic scenario Labour could not achieve an overall majority in a first-past-the-post election; while the results as a whole demonstrate that it's only on a first-past-the-post basis that the Conservatives could look for an overall majority. Whereas the supplementary vote offers Labour the prospect of majority government in a good year and minority government more often (see table), it also creates hung parliaments—in which Labour is almost always the largest party.

Look now at the results under a supplementary vote system. If you first take a worst-case assumption—that Labour obtains fewer than half (40-50 per cent) of the second preferences of non-Tory voters—Labour gets a few seats fewer than in a first-past-the-post, and on the more optimistic scenarios could probably form a minority government. By contrast, the Tories lose three or five times as many seats and are at once deprived of an overall majority.

If you take a more realistic view—that Labour would get 50-60 per cent of second preferences (in line with the April 1989 Mori poll)—Labour gains between three and 17 more seats than it would get under the existing electoral system, and could look forward to minority government and (on the more optimistic scenarios) even an overall majority. Meanwhile, the Conservatives lose between 49 and 86 seats (and up to 155 seats by comparison with the 1987 election results).

Finally, if Labour were able to attract 60-70 per cent of non-Tory second preferences Labour gains between 25 and 33 seats more than it would under the existing electoral system, and Tory losses are between 67 and 104 seats. Again, Labour could look forward to minority or majority government.

In all the calculations, I have assumed that Tory and Labour voters will switch to minority parties rather than vote for their party's main rival. So where do seats that don't switch between the two major parties go under a supplementary vote system—and which party loses them? The answer is that on almost all scenarios, some 30 to 60 seats shift from the Conservatives to the centre (Democrats, SDP) or any other credible alternative (the Greens)—in other words, the artificial majority which the Tories enjoy under first-past-the-post is entirely removed. The seats which change hands are unwinnable by Labour on any scenario, however fantastic; and unfortunately for Paddy Ashdown, they don't remotely add up to the kind of centrist breakthrough he wants (and this is extrapolating from 1987, not 1989!).



Similarly, in Scotland, the supplementary vote would more fairly represent the voice of nationalism without making room for an artificial SNP breakthrough; the Scottish Nationalists would gain three to five seats, almost all at the Tories' expense. In Wales, Plaid Cymru would probably hold their current three seats and could gain another seat in exceptional circumstances. In both Scotland and Wales, second preference nationalist votes would strengthen Labour's position against the Tories.

These results are, of course, based on the 1987 general election, when there was a large, and unified, centre party vote. The centre parties are now split, the SDP has been destroyed as a national presence, the Democrats' poll ratings have slumped (though local election results have held up) and the Greens have achieved a stunning Euro-election success. What difference will these changes make?

If the Greens were to displace the Democrats and SDP as the clear third-party choice (in my view, an unlikely scenario), then the results of my calculations would largely stand—except that the shift of seats away from the Tories would benefit the Greens. Further, greens who are voting for a candidate who isn't a frontrunner should be more likely to give their second preference vote to an environmentally-conscious Labour candidate (Labour's publicity chief, Peter Mandelson, recently wrote a paper suggesting that greens are likely to share the Labour view that the market alone can't safeguard the environment).

If, however, the Greens rival the Democrats and SDP without displacing them, the non-Tory vote will be split four ways. At first sight, Labour would gain at once under the supplementary vote. Its candidates would make second place more frequently (in 30 to 60 seats) and seats never previously won by Labour

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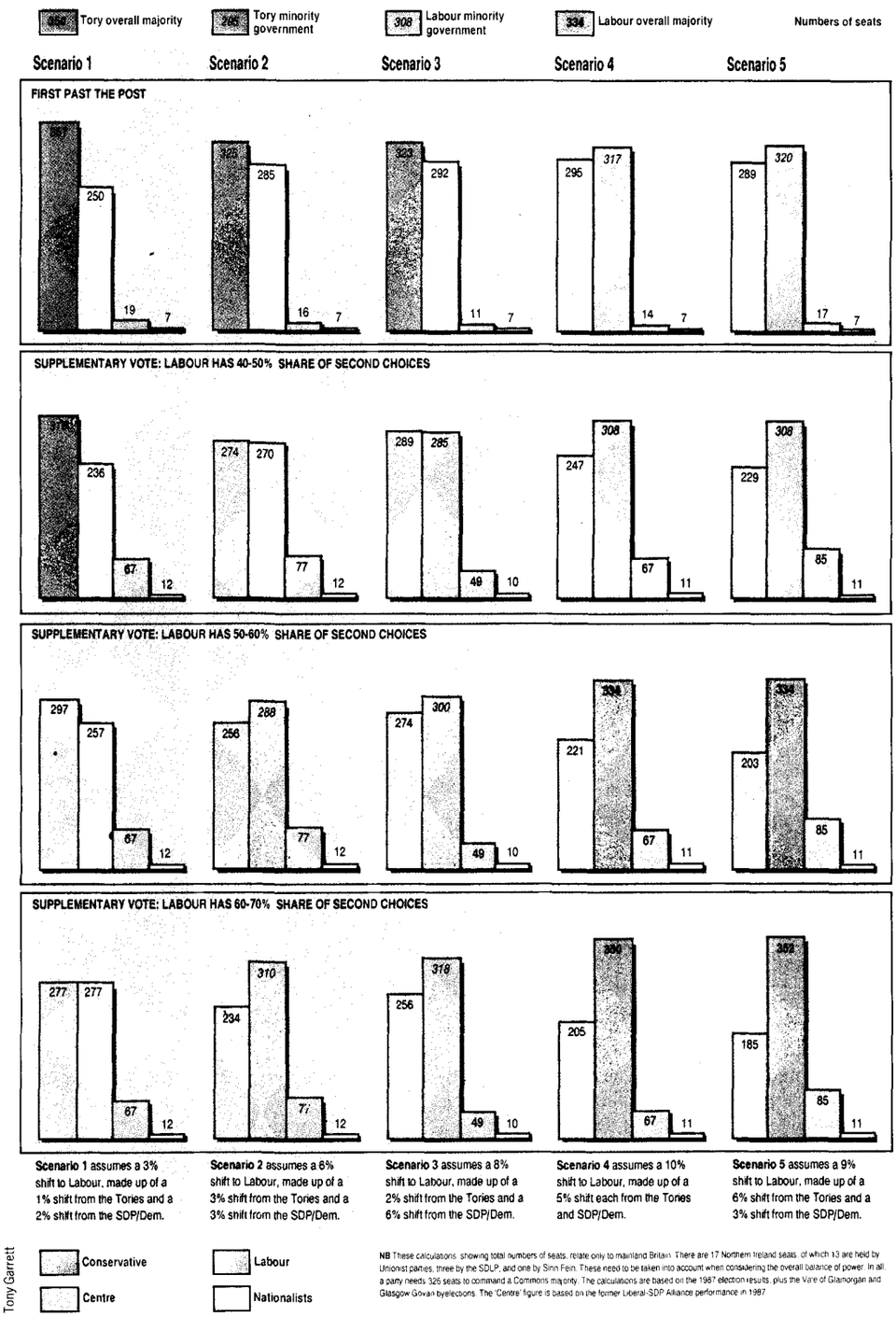
How the supplementary vote would change the Commons



Tony Garrett

would become winnable—but only if the party has honestly tackled the green agenda (see my *Guardian* Agenda article, January 1989). Given a well-targeted campaign, Labour could expect 10 to 20 more seats than my table shows. The downside is that, if Labour fails to grasp these second-preference votes, the Tories would keep up to 60 more seats.

Under the existing system, of course, a divided Green/centrist vote would deliver all those seats to the Conservatives anyway. If four-party politics comes to Britain with the Greens, then the Tories could hold power for the rest of the millenium under current electoral arrangements.

By contrast, the supplementary vote removes the Tories' built-in electoral advantage. It provides a far more balanced political environment for Labour and the other parties while retaining single-member constituencies and encouraging voters to focus on the key issue: "Which party will actually run the government?" The case for electoral reform is very much on the political agenda. Beneath the surface in the Labour Party, a majority for change is steadily building up. Yet we are constantly asked: "How can you change the electoral system before you have a government which is willing to make the change? And what government which has won power on the current system will actually carry out such a change?"

Obviously, before any change can be made, Labour must win power in a first-past-the-post election, taking the Watfords and Waveneys from the Conservatives. Though the policy review has restored Labour's reputation, and won back Labour voters from the centre parties, the party is still not in sight of the 1945 swing necessary to gain power. But a commitment to electoral reform would revolutionise the political environment. Electoral reform is overwhelmingly popular with just that section of the electorate which Labour must further win over to form the next government.

My proposal is that Labour should adopt the supplementary vote system and go into the next election with a firm promise to legislate for change within a year of taking office. Such a pledge will radically improve Labour's image as a democratic party, reassure voters who genuinely doubt the party's democratic credentials and marginalise the standard Tory scares and smears.

If Labour then won an outright majority in 1991-92, it could make the supplementary vote become law however the House of Lords behaved, and the following election would be fought on this basis. Then, at least, Labour would know that the Conservatives could not return on an artificial majority to overturn its other achievements. If it fails to win a majority, then its democratic stance would give the party a better chance than now of being the largest party in the Commons and of negotiating with the other non-Tory parties to bring in a bill to introduce the supplementary vote and to call another election on this more favourable territory once it has become law.

My own preference is for a minority Labour government to give such a bill priority and to undertake to hold a further general election at the end of its first full year legislative session. Such a proposal might require discussions with the minority parties prior to the next election, so as to assess the level of support and raise the public profile of the proposed reform.

Of course, it is impossible to predict with accuracy what would happen. But the supplementary vote gives Labour far more chance of taking, and remaining in, power than the present system, and to adopt it as party policy would be to act in accordance with its own principles and traditions of increasing democratic representation. A campaign with this democratic dimension could, if properly handled, unite the party and would be popular not only with the electorate as a whole, but most popular of all with just that section of the electorate Labour has to win.

The arguments for change could hardly be stronger. Conversely, if Labour—the "party of reform"—clings conservatively to an electoral system which is patently unfair and unpopular, and which excludes the party from a reasonable prospect of power, then the party will only have itself to blame if it loses yet again. And the people Labour have failed, and who desperately need a change of government, will blame Labour too.●

Dale Campbell Savours is Labour MP for Workington. *He would like to thank Professor Patrick Dunleavy, of the LSE, for his work with the statistical data, James Mahon for his research, and staff of the House of Commons statistical department for their tireless cooperation.*

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The gangster spirit

Self-congratulation has taken on the status of patriotism in the US. Novelist E L Doctorow challenges the national mood

Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History?*, an absurdly self-congratulatory hymn to the final victory of economic and political liberalism has received generous space in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Independent*. E L Doctorow's critical speech—something is rotten in the state of American society—was made to graduates of the élite Brandeis University last May. It was to have been published in the university's alumni magazine, but in August a change of heart took place. Curiously, Martin Paretz, the editor of *The New Republic*, who was present when Doctorow gave his speech, chose just this moment to make a savage attack on it. Doctorow's speech has just been published in full by *The Nation*, our sister magazine in New York—and now here. History is fighting back.

I'm honoured to be called upon to speak to you—not a politician but a novelist included, I like to think, among the "unacknowledged legislators of the world" in Shelley's phrase—unacknowledged like the poets, like all artists, in fact, helpless legislators of created consciousness who from the struggles of their own minds make poems and stories that would contribute to the moral consciousness of their time.

So I will begin by turning for instruction to an earlier unacknowledged legislator, a story writer, a novelist, who lived and flourished in the 1920s. His name was Sherwood Anderson, and he's most famous today for a small book of stories about life in a small town in middle America around the turn of the century. *Winesburg, Ohio* is the title of this book. Some of you may know it. And in his introduction to the book, Anderson proposes a theory which he calls the theory of grotesques. It is not a scientific theory but a historical poetic theory of what happens to people sometimes as they strive to give value and meaning to their lives.

Here is the theory: that all about us in the world are many truths to live by, and they are all beautiful—the truth of passion and love, the truth of candour and of thrift, the truth of patriotism, the truth of self-reliance, and so on. But as people come along and try to make something of themselves, they snatch up a truth and make it their own predominating truth to the exclusion of all others. And what happens, says Anderson, is that the moment a person does this—clutches one truth too tightly—the truth so embraced becomes a lie and the person turns into a grotesque.

Suppose, for instance, you're thrifty and you work hard and scrimp and save and live modestly in order to pay your way through college. Your thrift is a good thing. But then afterwards, in later life, long after it is necessary, you continue to deny yourself and you save and save until hoarding money becomes an end in itself. Your thrift has become a lie. You've turned into a miser. You've become a grotesque. You see how it works?

If, for instance, your patriotism blinds you to all other moral and ethical truths, and from your love of country you deceive duly constituted bodies of governmental authority, and you break laws and shred documents, the truth of patriotism has turned to a lie in your embrace, and made you a grotesque.

Or take the truth of self-reliance. It is undeniably beautiful. It was the truth that underlay the entire administration of the previous president, Ronald Reagan—this idea of self-reliance, rugged individualism. Who wouldn't like to stand up for himself, independently, and make his own way through life?

Paul Bateman

Yet Reagan's advocacy of self-reliance caused him to scorn or forget other truths—of community, for example, and the moral responsibility we have towards those with fewer advantages, and the profound truth of the interdependence of all society's citizens. And so he was moved at various times in his administration to take away school lunches from needy children and tuition loans from students, and to deny legal services to poor people and psychological counselling to Vietnam veterans, and social security payments to handicapped people. You see how it works—this theory?

In fact, I will venture to say that insofar as Mr Reagan inserted his particular truth into the national American mind he made it the lobotomising pin of conservative philosophy that has governed us and is continuing to govern us to this very moment.

The philosophical conservative is someone willing to pay the price of other people's suffering for his principles. And so now we have hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of our citizens lying around in the streets of our cities, sleeping in doorways, begging with styrofoam cups. We didn't have a class of permanent beggars in this country—in the United States—15 or 20 years ago. We didn't have kids selling crack in their grade schools, or businessmen magnifying their fortunes into megafortunes by stock manipulation and thievery—I don't remember such epidemics of major corporate frauds.

A decade ago you did not have college students scrawling racial epithets or anti-semitic graffiti on the room doors of their fellow students. You did not have cops strangling teenage boys to death or shooting elderly deranged women in their own homes. You did not have scientists falsifying the results of experiments, or preachers committing the sins against which they so thunderously preached. A generation or so back, you didn't have every class of society, and every occupation, widely, ruggedly practising its own characteristic form of crime.

So something poisonous has been set loose in the last several years as we have enjoyed life under the power and principles of political conservatism. And I have used Sherwood Anderson's theory of the grotesque to account for it,

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but I don't know what to call it—a gangsterdom of spirit, perhaps. I do know that to describe it is bad form. To speak of a loss of cohesion in society, a loss of moral acuity, is tiresome. It is the tiresome talk of liberalism.

In fact, part of this poisonous thing that I'm trying to describe is its characteristic way of dealing with criticism: it used to be enough to brand a critic as a radical or a leftist to make people turn away. Now we need only call them liberals. Soon "moderate" will be the M word, "conservative" will be the C word and only fascists will be in the mainstream. And that degradation of discourse, that, too, is part of this something that is really rotten in America right now.

Some of you, perhaps some of your parents, may be wondering at this time if I am speaking appropriately for this occasion, which is after all a celebration. In answer, I have to say I believe my subject is all too appropriate; I think it is my obligation to tell you, as truthfully as I can, the context, the social setting in which you will find yourself when you walk out of here with your degree. As an unacknowledged legislator, I am giving you not a State of the Union address but a State of the Mind of the Union address.

What does it do to you young people, I wonder, to grow up in a time in which the bottom line standard of business thinking now controls every aspect of our lives? You may have heard our President ask the other day that the Senate delay its consideration of a bill to apply stricter ethical standards to government officials. Mr Bush is worried that if men and women are made to behave honestly, they won't want to work in his administration. That's funny, except that at one time people were *honoured* to be called upon to use their expertise for the sake of their country. There was an ideal of public service, and financial sacrifice was part of that ideal. Now, it is taken for granted by everyone in Washington that people can only be expected to come to work for their country if they can afterward turn a trick from it.

It is in this context that I find myself thinking of a lately deceased Brandeis graduate—as unbusinesslike a person as you'd ever meet. He is not the sort of alumnus you would expect to be mentioned or that I would expect to mention in a commencement address. His name was Abbie Hoffman. Class of '59. I knew Abbie, though we were not close, and I didn't have much contact with him in the sixties. The truth is I found him easier to take from a distance; I have to admit that our ways were different, but I admired him tremendously. He was fearless, and very funny, with the humour, the precision of insight of a great political cartoonist. And as an activist he put his body on the line.

In the sixties he was a scruffy sort of fellow, skinny and nimble, somewhat unwashed-looking with his torn T-shirts and jeans, his long hair, his headband. He was founder of the Yippies, the Youth International Party. And he was in the vanguard of the anti-war movement in the days of big street demonstrations, much like the one they have been having in China, and for the same reasons, to bring government into alignment with the popular will of the people.

Anyway, Abbie did street theatre, he staged events that might be clownish or vulgar but that invariably caught the attention of the media and enraged the authorities. (For instance, I remember once he wore a shirt made from an American flag, and when angry policemen tore it off his back he shouted, "I have only one shirt to give for my country!") He got people terribly mad, Abbie, and for very good reason: he was insufferable. He was insufferable because he held the mirror up wherein we saw ourselves. That's just what the biblical prophets did—they operated in just that way. Wasn't it Isaiah who walked abroad naked to prophesy the deportation of the Jews? And wasn't it Jeremiah who wore a yoke around his neck to prophesy their slavery? Same insufferable thing. So Abbie was a kind of unacknowledged legislator of this order. Once he organised a demonstration to ring the Pentagon and by means of prayer and incantations make it rise from the ground and levitate.

And another thing he did—he stood in the gallery overlooking the New York Stock Exchange and threw handfuls of dollar bills down on the floor and watched all the traders scramble to pick up the money. These were prophetic acts, were they not? Throwing money on to the floor of the Stock Exchange knowing people would crawl around in a frenzy to pick it up? The Pentagon and the Stock Exchange are in the eighties the twin images of our idolatry. He had it exactly right.

It's my view that in the last decade or so of life in our country, roughly the time since you've

LEFT CEN

The Sunday Times has strong views of its own – but it also publishes every other opinion that matters.
From Brian Walden on the radical right to Martin Jacques on the radical left,
with plenty in-between, like Robert Harris, Susan Crosland and Michael Jones;
and columnists Simon Jenkins and Norman Macrae, who, depending on the issue,
could come down anywhere on the political spectrum.
In fact, you'll find more diversity of opinion in The Sunday Times than all other Sundays put together.

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been in the tenth grade, we have seen a national regression to the robber baronial thinking of the 19th century. This amounts to nothing less than a deconstruction of America—the dismantling of enlightened social legislation that had begun to bring equity over half a century to the lives of working people, to rectify some of the terrible imbalance of racial injustice and give a fair shake to the outsiders, the underdogs, the newcomers.

We have seen the ideals of environmental sanctity sacrificed to the bottom-line demands of business thinking in which we have done only as much to protect our environment as industry has found convenient, as if only a few songbirds and some poor dumb animals were at stake, as if the bleeding hearts of woody environmentalists were the issue, and not our lungs and skins and genes, and the wholeness of health of our children and their children.

We have seen a new generation of nativist know-nothings called up like primitive and comic-book warriors to make overt the covert racism and anti-semitism of the campaign demagoguery of our conservative politicians. And we have seen with more and more deadening frequency the banning of the books of our heritage in our schools and public libraries—as for instance in Panama City, Florida, where they have found it necessary to expunge such dangers to the Republic as *Wuthering Heights, Hamlet, The Red Badge of Courage* and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.*

So that we may have in fact broken down, as a social contract, in our time, as if we were not supposed to be a just nation but a confederacy of stupid murderous gluttons. So that, finally, our country itself, the idea, the virtue, the truth of America, is in danger of becoming a grotesque.

This is certainly serious stuff for a happy day, but I would not be doing honour to you and this occasion if I did not tell you what's been going on while I've been waiting for you.

That is something else I meant to say. That we've been waiting for you. Did you know that? Your mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers—in fact all the generations older than yours have been watching you and waiting for you. Because whether you know it or not, you have learned here at Bran 's the difference between authentic thought and cant, between the valid proposition and the fraudulent, between rational thought, honest perception, on the one hand, and simplistic intellectual flummery on the other. And that makes you very precious to us, and to our nation.

And if your teachers here have seemed to you at various times to possess commanding intellectual presence, and I trust that they have, the truth is that they are itinerants, like you, having given their lives over to the strange species-grooming that is particularly Homosapient—the modest, exhausted instruction in mind-survival that will succeed theirs.

And everything impractical they've given you, lines of poetry, phrases of music, and philosophical propositions, and ancient histories, and myths and dance steps, is terribly practical—in fact, the only means we have of defending the borders of a magnanimous, humanist civilisation—that civilisation which is today under such assault.

The presumption of your life here is that every life has a theme. It is a literary idea, the great root discovery of narrative literature—and there is human freedom to find it, to create it, to make it victorious. And so however you find your society as you walk out of here, you do not have to embrace its lies, or become complicitors to its cruelties. Perhaps that is what your faculty wanted to say to you.

You are in charge of yourselves.

The stack of books you've collected in your four years here is an icon of the humanist ideal.

You have sanctity of thought, the means to stay in touch with the truth.

Your living, inquiring and lighted minds are enlisted in the struggle for a human future and a society unbesieged by the grotesqueries of stupidity and error.

You may not have realised it, and we are somewhat embarrassed to have to say it, but willy-nilly and *ipso facto*, you commence this day in the name of civilisation.

I have every confidence in you. And I congratulate you. From up here I have to say you all look very beautiful to me. Your families, I know, are proud of you, Brandeis University is proud of you, and let me say as an itinerant speechmaker, I find that I am proud of you too. God bless you all.

E L Doctorow's latest novel, "Billy Bathgate" has just been published in Britain by Macmillan

TRE RIGHT

A BROADER SPECTRUM OF OPINION.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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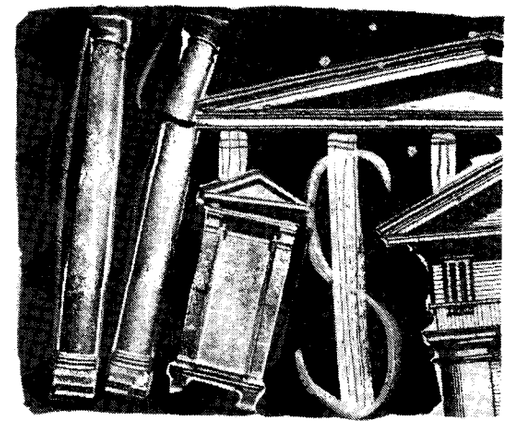
Castle Rackrent

The government's offer to make museums and galleries owners of their own homes is a poisoned chalice, argues Michael Levey, former director of the National Gallery



It now seems like a dream, and it may sound like a nightmare, but in rounding a corner in the National Gallery one evening, many years ago, I bumped into the then Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was a shock—until I remembered that the gallery was trying to obtain a special grant from the government towards purchase of an important painting. Before saying yes or no, the Chancellor had come to look at the painting for himself.

A grant was forthcoming, as I recall, but that is not the point. Even had the Chancellor refused, it could never have been said that the government of the day, a Tory one, incidentally, was deaf or indifferent to the gallery's plea. After all, the holder of the nation's purse-strings had bothered to snatch a few minutes to go to examine the item and the claim in the most direct way possible. In so doing, he tacitly recognised that here was a serious case, aspects of which involved the nation's interest.

Today it would be impossible to encounter the Chancellor of the Exchequer on such a mission, even assuming a Chancellor of goodwill towards national museums and galleries. Much direct handling of museums by central government has been abandoned over the years, starting with the Treasury ceasing to act as their immediate controlling authority—though that implies no loss of ultimate Treasury control.

A Minister for the Arts now exists, and it is—or it should be—his job to fight with the Treasury, for funds for the museums. Special grants have been abolished. It would be necessary now to approach the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which could help only if the object came within its terms of reference, quite apart from whether it had any money available.

Something has indeed been lost (lost perhaps in the dreary offices of that metaphorical post office, the Office of Arts and Libraries, more barrier than bulwark where museums are concerned); and there is certainly a good deal of Uriah Heepishness in invocation of the "arm's-length" principle in order to shift responsibility from ministers as soon as unpalatable financial decisions have to be made.

But there never was an enlightened period when the Treasury showered the museums with gold. In the high noon of Victorian prosperity, the message might be suavely conveyed in copper-plate handwriting on fine-quality parchment, but the refusal to sanction expenditure was often as brutal in import as any today. To add to the irony, the explanation usually offered was the state of the economy.

So what has largely characterised government treatment of the museums until now has been a tradition of official parsimony, punctuated by freaks of perceptiveness and fits of generosity. The affair has been thoroughly British and hopelessly amateurish, distinguished by absence of policy or long-term thinking.

All that has changed under the present government. The national museums were changing well before Mrs Thatcher came to power. Public attitudes have also changed.

In such a climate the recent action of the chairmen of the five leading English national museums, in writing directly to the Prime Minister, rates as no mere squall but more of a gale warning. They wrote some weeks ago, pressing for government funding of the physical repairs needed to their buildings. So far as is known they have as yet had no response.

Seldom can a letter, whether or not welcome to the recipient, have been so easily foreseen. The precipitating factor has been the government's proposal to hand over to the various institutions complete responsibility for their own buildings.

To anyone unacquainted with British ways it might seem surprising that the National Gallery has always been merely the tenant of that familiar building in Trafalgar Square. As for the implications of being such a tenant (with the Department of the Environment the landlord), those are best appreciated by someone with comparable experience in their private life. Upkeep and repair of their homes are of desperate concern to those living there, while they mean much less to a landlord living elsewhere, owning other properties, reluctant to pay out money, growing weary of the tenants' complaints...

But the national museums were not like individuals who can, at least theoretically, get out and find a better home. They were placed, as they have been for generations, in a situation illogical, cramping, complex and intensely frustrating. Whatever the motive behind the government's proposal, it is bold and sensible, and must in principle be welcome. Plenty of previous governments were aware of the problem and shied away from tackling it.

Grateful feelings of relief and freedom can hardly be in order, however, until the proposal is given reality by the concomitant provision of adequate cash to cope with the urgent repairs needed to the buildings being handed over. Without that, the prospect is equivalent to taking on Castle Rackrent.

Even today's species of private landlord might hesitate to claim he was benefiting his tenants by disembarrassing himself of a slum about to collapse unless they propped it up out of their own pockets.

For the past decade the Tory government has been presiding over the fate of the national museums. In the government's hands has lain the total financial responsibility for their fabric—both moral and physical. Its recent action has revealed the state of its own stewardship, and nothing could be more bogus than official surprise at the results.

Down the decades, the museums and the more "engaged" of DoE staff have initiated, and often compiled, a stream of reports on the state of deplorable drains, dilapidated roofs, rusting

"Roofs are patched and let in rain. Lighting and air conditioning installations are obsolete and prone to failure. Wiring, fire and security systems have to be replaced, and as a consequence of the general dilapidation it is no exaggeration to say that the paintings are at daily risk."
Neil MacGregor
Director of the National Gallery

"We would like to build up our collection of postwar American painting. But we are getting people saying, 'Why should we give things to the Tate? The rooms are dirty. We've heard that the roof leaks.' And they are not convinced we will make the best use of the works they donate."
Nicholas Serota
Director of the Tate Gallery

"The situation is now such that we cannot put on any exhibition either at the V&A or at the Theatre Museum which is not fully sponsored."
Mrs Esteve-Coll
Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, quoted in the Guardian, 2 August

"When Mrs Thatcher opened the Design Museum...two weeks ago, she commented that it should have been called 'an exhibition centre and not a museum—a museum is something that is really rather dead'."
Observer, 23 July

[It is difficult to find money] "to clean the drains, to make sure the plumbing works, and to make sure the roof remains in reasonable order".
Prince Charles
A trustee of the National Gallery

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Beverley Levy

ironwork and all the other ills which typify aged buildings. All those reports will have carried the warning that delay would simply increase the final costs. The latest chalice on offer is not merely poisoned in its contents but its very metal is corroded through neglect. No wonder if boards of trustees refuse to touch it.

To suppose that the present crisis has been caused by ineptitude or crass philistinism quite misses the mark. Philistinism there may be, but, if so, it is less crass than canny. The museums long ago learnt that in times of economic hardship they are among the first bodies to suffer government cuts.

What is novel about this government's attitude is that the museums should be deliberately starved at a period when the same government boasts of having achieved miracles of national prosperity and is so flush with funds (our money) that, like its supporters, it spends millions weekly on advertising.

The timing is no accident. It is deliberate, macho policy, and in its effect on museums lies an element, conscious or not, of revenge.

When Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister she may have noticed, if she spared a glance, that the museums were in the process of adapting themselves to a new role in society, expanding not territorially but in service to the public. No longer supine and slightly forbidding establishments, seemingly questioning whether you were good enough to pass through their doors, they had begun to question whether they were good enough—attractive enough—for you, me, people generally, inclusive of that previously despised visitor, the child.

It gave me a thrill of real pride, I confess, when a woman scholar wrote haughtily to complain of children in the exhibition rooms of the National Gallery, in the tone of one who has found fleas in an hotel bed. But everywhere museums were waking up. Public demand required better facilities, and nourishment, not only spiritual but physical (with something edible in the cafeteria). And those in authority in the museums believed in making the treasures they held in trust for the nation available, freely available, to the nation. Some of those people had done all they could to resist the imposition of entrance charges, the contribution to improving the quality of life of Lord Eccles, the first Tory Minister for the Arts.

Only gradually, perhaps, was it apparent that spreading the message of visual pleasure widely through society to enrich people's lives was distasteful to the new government. Society was deemed not to exist. Making things freely available smacked of socialism. Enrich was a verb of purely financial application. The criteria for a museum's success were revised. Visitors became customers. The highest term of praise for a museum became businesslike—though not, presumably, too like, say, Barlow Clowes. Some museums have hastened to ape the government's attitude, not least by introducing entrance charges; it may seem that a "good conduct" medal is thereby won, but under another administration, such decorations will burn as badges of shame.

What has been hoped for, indeed planned for, is that under a combination of bullying and starvation the national museums will go away: go and live largely at the mercy of private resources or expire, unlamented, in the public gutter. And typically, history is being rewritten to speed the process. There is an implication, one quite baseless, that in their previous manifestation the museums were unbusinesslike.

It may be true that they did not make money, but then neither did they go bust or distress people. Nor is there any novelty in seeking—and receiving—generous help from the private sector. Long before anybody thought up a Ministry of the Arts, or the concept of sponsorship was devalued by repetition, private resources aided museums, donating buildings, objects and sums of cash; and it is wrong if that roll-call of names from the past is now forgotten. Almost literally, our museums are built on, and out of, that generosity.

But it is another thing to have a minister who responds to any pressure to find funds (and to restore the very grants his predecessor reduced) by behaving like a large, amiable, inflatable doll, and when pressed, is able to utter just the one word: "Sponsorship". What has never been clear is why it is only the arts which must find sponsors.

If we have to have an Office of Arts and Libraries, why should not that charge on limited funds be borne by sponsorship? Sponsors can be capricious but one would sympathise with any company that withdrew its support after a year. Meanwhile, the museums are reduced both physically and morally by being bent in pursuit of sponsors for virtually any fresh or useful activity. Sometimes one can see the positively damaging effect of being compelled to placard a decent building with displays of gratitude; on other occasions the taint is more insidious in its quid pro quo, as when creche facilities are made possible thanks to King Herod Enterprises Ltd.

Too great a success in the sponsorship stakes does not necessarily even gain any government reward. Indeed, it could be used as an argument against government subvention.

So far—with one flagrant exception—the museums and galleries involved have stood the strain miraculously well, in terms both of material survival and morale. But the situation is precarious, and the present issue highlights it. The cause chosen is no arty, vague one but incontrovertible, inescapable, hard fact. The chairmen have revived the face-to-face style of the old days, which seems suited to dealing with a Prime Minister who really *is* the government.

As well chosen as the cause is the timing. Public perception of the government in its attitude to a mass of matters has grown suspicious if not hostile. Just as the Canadian government may secretly be terribly fond of baby seals, so our government may care desperately about culture and the environment. Unfortunately, it isn't very convincing. It is not much helped by a new party chairman who confides to the *Sunday Times* (a fit receptacle for views like his) that "the best things in life are rarely free". What is true of hair-gel, however, is not true of such lesser things as love, children, friends and even eyesight and sunlight, not to mention pleasure from the arts. Kenneth Baker's best things obviously come from Harrods or from Savile Row, and there will always be an opening for him in advertising should politics become too idealistic.

That the government can be worried about its ugly cultural image was revealed last year when Mrs Thatcher abruptly started flashing a cool £100 million of taxpayers' money at Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza when she learned that he planned to deposit his picture collection outside Switzerland. A whiff of international competition, high finance and a dash of art made a heady potion, brandished in vain as a sort of Isolde cocktail the Baron declined to share in drinking.

The museums that already exist in England may be less glamorous and exotic, but in sober fact they offer a much better-based opportunity to do the nation some cultural good, before it is too late. We have the evidence that the cash exists. Mrs Thatcher can buy the intangible with the tangible: provide the museums with the money needed to set their houses in adequate physical order and gain the no less urgently needed improvement in perception of her government. Now is the time to be truly businesslike and seize a unique, double bargain. ●

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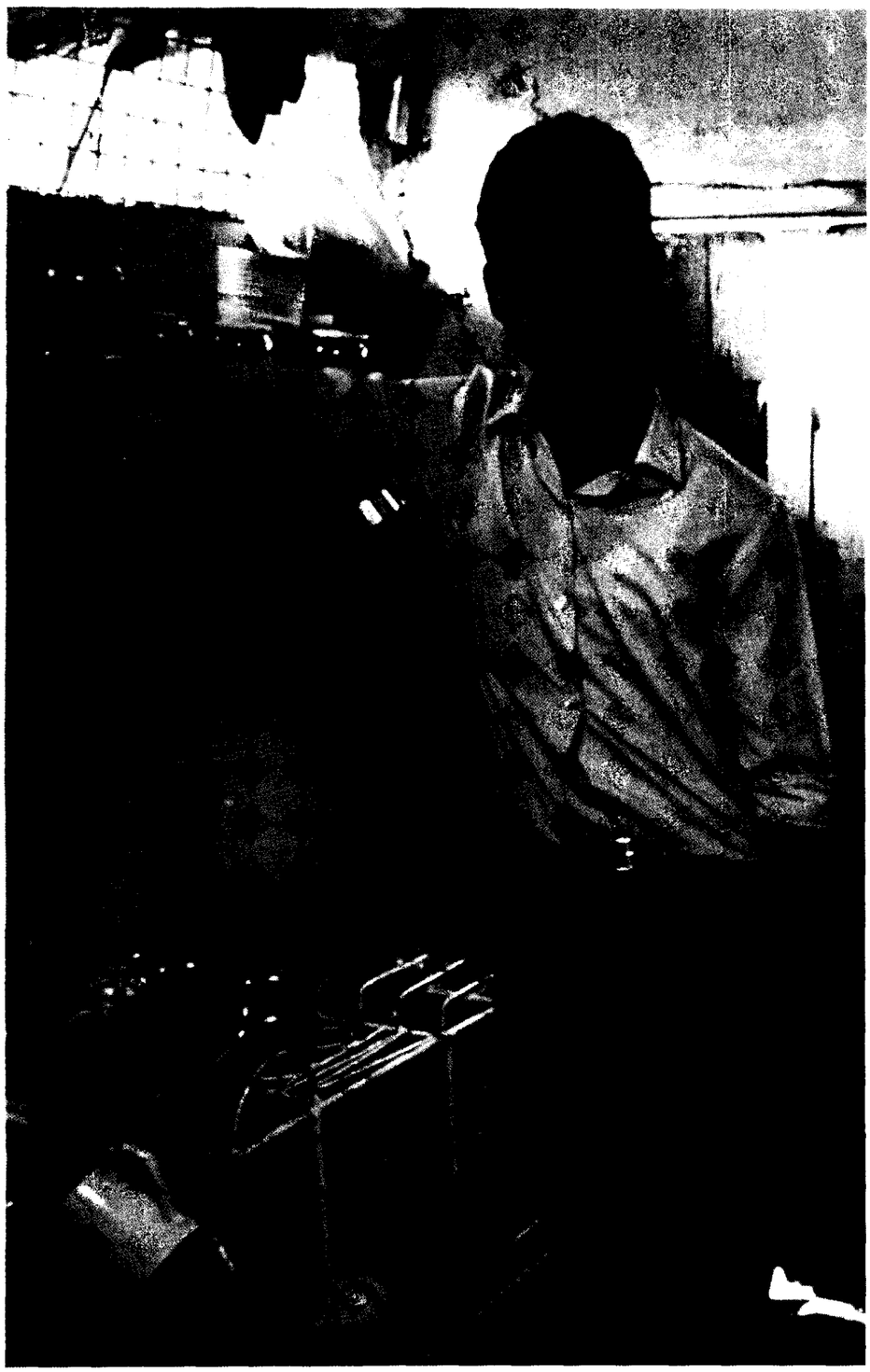
A well-founded fear?

In 1987 the British government sent Tamils seeking refugee status back to Sri Lanka, to face torture and harassment. Only now are they being allowed to return here. Ros Franey reports



Mike Shrimpton

We set out through the hot streets of Colombo. As visitors from the Mother Country, the cameraman, Mike Shrimpton, and I had entered Sri Lanka openly, without visas: a British couple with a video camera. It was ironic in view of the story we had come to film for *First Tuesday*—the story of what it is like to be a failed refugee, refused asylum in Britain, and sent back to the country of feared persecution.

Sabu, our guide, led us through a gateway. The street at that point was full of people who all seemed to be watching us. It would look suspicious to walk on and return later. We followed Sabu into the house where we were told Vathanan was hiding.

It was, in fact, a single narrow room with a small kitchen at the back, partitioned from the main building by a breeze-block wall that stopped a foot from the ceiling. By the light of an electric bulb and a slit of window we could make out a single bed, a small table, a couple of suitcases, a mattress leaning, as if unused, against the wall. The mattress was Vathanan's. He had to eliminate traces of his presence during the day. Someone left food for him in the kitchen, and that was all. An ironed shirt hung from a hanger. On the table were a chess board, a can of deodorant spray and a little pile of school books: English grammar. This was where Vathanan lived, one of a series of safe houses in an underground existence that had been forced on him for over a year.

For Vathanan it had started when he was 17, in February 1987, on the runway at Heathrow Airport when he was one of 58 Tamils who stripped off their clothes in protest at an attempted mass removal of asylum seekers by the British Home Office. The demonstration had won him a temporary respite—and eight months in British detention centres—until he was eventually deported a year later when his application failed. He has no relatives in Colombo and had lost touch with his mother and sister in January 1987 when the whole family was caught in an air-raid in which their house near Jaffna was destroyed. He has no idea if they escaped alive.

On the other side of the partition wall someone was shuffling about. Crows racketed around on the roof, drowning Mike's whispered instructions to Vathanan as he started filming: "Not at me. Look past me." I knew better than Sabu that this would have to take a little time. My shameful buzz of excitement had long since evaporated. Sabu (not his real name) had put his

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job on the line for us. Vathanan had twice been arrested since his return to Sri Lanka, and had once been seriously beaten up, for the crime of failing to possess an ID card; now he was putting his freedom in our hands. What on earth did we think we were playing at? We should not be here.

Nor should Vathanan. Four months earlier a court in London had allowed an appeal by Vathanan and four other Tamils against the Home Office's decision to remove them. From a painstaking examination of the facts of each case, and an assessment of evidence from expert witnesses about the political situation in Sri Lanka, the Immigration Appeals Tribunal had found that all five of the men had demonstrated "a well-founded fear of persecution" in Sri Lanka. This is the criterion laid down by the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. It is binding on Britain.

The tribunal ruled that the men had been genuine refugees at the time of the Secretary of State's decision to remove them and that their circumstances had not changed since. The Secretary of State's decision, it said, had been wrong. Notably, the Home Office, whose Minister David Waddington had publicly denounced the original 58 Tamils as "manifestly bogus" applicants, now offered no evidence against them.

Geoffrey Care, the adjudicator, concluded his judgment: "I do not see that in these cases it is appropriate to do more than direct that each appellant be returned to the United Kingdom with the minimum of delay, which I do." The message to the Home Office could not have been more plain. Yet that was in March 1989. Our visit to Vathanan's hiding place was in June. This week the return of the Tamils is imminent, but at the time of writing they were still in Sri Lanka—a full six months after their legal victory.

The appeal procedure against their removal from Britain was lengthy and tortuous. Under judicial review it is procedure that is examined, not the facts of the cases themselves. British immigration law dictates that failed asylum seekers must return to their country of origin to mount a full appeal, a requirement so tough that, as far as is known, no one had ever managed to do it before. In these cases, two solicitors, David Burgess and Chris Randall, flew out to Sri Lanka and took statements from those of the men they could reach.

They discovered that all of them were living precariously in similar circumstances to Vathanan and that they or their families had been harassed by the security forces. One man, Sivakumaran (by which name the legal cases of all five are known), was allegedly imprisoned for three months. Another, Skandarajah, had been arrested on his first day back at home in Jaffna. He was held for ten weeks and tortured by the Indian peace-keeping forces. A third escaped from the country after the Indians raided his home on several occasions and tortured members of his family.

Vathanan's problems, which stemmed from the loss of his identity card, seem to have originated with the immigration authorities in England. They promised the card would be returned to him on his arrival in Sri Lanka, but Sri Lankan police denied all knowledge of it and the British immigration service eventually admitted it had been lost.

The immediate reaction of the Home Office to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal was to appeal against the decision. The notice announcing this intention was despatched to the wrong address and by the time the blunder was discovered the deadline for sending it had expired. This gave rise to further High Court hearings in which procedures were chewed over in terms light years away from the realities of Colombo. However, at the end of July came a second victory for the five Tamils when the High Court told the Home Office that it could no longer delay their return to Britain while their applications for asylum were being reconsidered.

Underlying the two-and-a-half-year history of the Sivakumaran case is a dispute between the courts and the British government about the interpretation of refugee law. In 1987, when the Tamils temporarily won in the Court of Appeal, the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, went on the BBC's *World at One* to protest that the decision would open the doors to a large increase in asylum seekers. He compared the situation to Germany where "last year they had 100,000 applications for asylum as opposed to our 4,000".

This so annoyed the Master of the Rolls, Sir John (now Lord) Donaldson, whose decision it had been, that he broke with convention to speak out in court: "As far as I could make out, either no one had read the judgment—this I am bound to say included the Secretary of State who broadcast on the radio... or they did not want to understand the judgment."

"What is the Secretary of State expecting? Have I to kill myself before he will believe me?"

In fact, Home Office figures show a steady decline throughout the eighties in the number of applicants from all countries who were granted full refugee status (which carries increased security and greater privileges than the more commonly used "exceptional leave to remain"). In 1987, the most recent year for which figures exist, 1,891 applicants were granted exceptional leave while a further 378 were given full refugee status.

The Home Office was unable to provide a spokesperson for our *First Tuesday* programme, but it has steadily maintained in relation to this case (notably in a protracted correspondence with the refugee group Charter 87) that it "continues to treat asylum applicants in a liberal and humanitarian spirit". As far as Sivakumaran is concerned, however, the Home Office will still contest the five Tamils' right to stay in Britain.

Skandarajah, one of Vathanan's colleagues, is at a loss about this. "I don't know how to prove to the UK Secretary of State that I am in 'well-founded fear' here," he told us. "What is the meaning of 'well-founded fear'? I was arrested in Colombo by Sri Lankan forces and they tortured me; also by Indian forces in Jaffna, arrested and tortured. What is he expecting? Have I to kill myself before he will believe that I am in a critical condition?"

It is cause for concern that Britain may mistakenly withhold asylum from anyone in need, but when those asylum seekers come from a country with such close ties as Sri Lanka there is something even more distasteful. It is not just a matter of red "GR" pillar boxes and national holidays for the wedding of Princess Di; it is a question of a belief, now being smashed, in British tolerance and fairness that generations of Sri Lankans have grown up with.

Desmond Fernando, a Sinhalese lawyer educated at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn at the end of the 50s, now chair of the Sri Lanka Bar Association, said to us of British Immigration Law: "These are not the laws that I learnt when I was in Britain. It is unfortunate that in recent times Britain has been forced to make laws that are not in keeping with the best traditions of British law."

Faced with the knowledge of what can happen to those sent back, a number of Tamils ordered to leave Britain have taken another course: they have gone into hiding. We were given an estimate of 400 Tamils living underground in this country.

After much hesitation, one of these hidden refugees agreed to a sound interview. He told us he had been arrested at least seven times by the Indian Army in his home village in the North. He was beaten on the soles of the feet, drenched in water and finally tortured with electric shocks around his rectum. After giving invented information about the Tamil Tigers, he was released and made his escape from Sri Lanka.

At his first interview with immigration officers at the point of entry into Britain he made no mention of his torture, saying only that he had been "roughly treated", and although he subsequently gave details of it, this original omission counted against him.

Then shortly after his arrival word reached him through an independent witness that Indian troops had been back to his home. They had shot and killed his younger brother (who was a member of the Tamil Tigers) and abducted his 16-year-old sister. She has never been seen since. The Home Office wrote that they were "sorry" to hear of these events, "but I am afraid it does not alter our view that [he] himself does not have a well-founded fear of persecution in Sri Lanka".

He had been on the run, he said, for almost a year. He carries with him a burden of guilt that the massacre of his family might in some way be connected with his escape. He has no home, can get no job and depends on the charity of friends. He was neat and quiet and desolate.

We took him to a peaceful part of King's Cross and filmed him with his back to the camera. But his agitation grew. At last he turned and said politely that he was sorry but he could face no more.●

First Tuesday's "A well-founded fear" will be broadcast on ITV at 10.30pm, 3 October.

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A driven man

The only way to get an interview with Gordon Brown is on the run. Sarah Benton keeps up

Gordon Brown MP lives on the run. ("He's a driven man," said one Scottish socialist; "he's a real son of the manse." He is, it's true, one of several sons of a Scottish minister.) In the end, only careful plotting with his two dedicated assistants, Sandy Hunt and Paul McKinney, devised a schedule which allowed me to interview him in snatches between the House of Commons, a summons to cost John Prescott's transport policy, Heathrow, and a train ride to Cardiff.

He first came to prominence last year as front bench economic spokesperson, then standing in for John Smith. So impressive was he that party members responded by putting him top of the poll for the shadow cabinet. He is now Shadow Treasury Secretary. Unlike Labour MPs such as Tony Benn and John Prescott who have worked hard to keep their names to the fore this year, Gordon Brown has been peculiarly reticent for a man who was tipped for the top. He characteristically brought out his latest book, *Where There's Greed*, without fanfare.

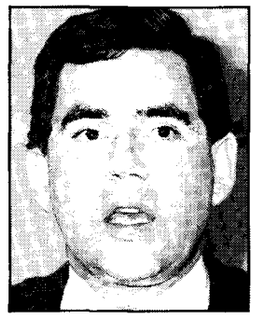
Once you've got his attention, Gordon Brown is charming, apologetic and, it seems, genuinely modest. He has given up smoking (one anecdote describes him smoking 13 cigarettes on the train between Edinburgh and Glasgow as he powered his way through the statistics which would get him the Dunfermline East constituency) but bites his nails to the quick. His intellectual energy took him to Edinburgh University at 16 years old, but his physical energy knocked him out of it; a football accident in his first weeks there lost him his first year as a student and the sight in his right eye.

His way of life is a sharp reminder of how re-selection has changed the Labour Party. Once Labour MPs lived in London, some of them paying only two or three visits a year to their constituency. Now Labour MPs must continually feed their constituency base or lose it. What Labour has gained in democracy from re-selection it may have lost in cohesive national party leadership. If all MPs live like this, it's hard to imagine how they have time to talk to each other, still less evolve a political strategy.

Ironically, Gordon Brown is one of the first to argue that the old style of fevered party activism must go. "We've got to convince people that the Labour Party is not only full of eight-day-a-week activists who do nothing other than talk to themselves," he said. As well as being one of the party's chief economists, he is its main spokesperson for the need to build the mass party. He argued this in a pamphlet published by the Tribune Group of MPs last year and was the only MP involved in the launch of the party's mass recruitment campaign.

But what will all these members do, I ask? Don't they just become the lay bureaucracy of the local state, endlessly passing resolutions and putting people on committees (only for those people to totter off feeling exhausted and impotent in the face of pressures beyond their control)? Does not the Labour Party itself produce a culture of bureaucracy? He is far more optimistic. That week, he and ten members had recruited 27 people in his constituency in just one evening.

He is struck by the culture of community activism in Scotland—despite years of unemployment. Indeed, his faith in popular participation in the running of things comes from the fact that so many people these days join local campaigns and voluntary associations. A local political culture today comes out of these, he thinks; and it is this which makes him believe that a politics of democratic accountability and participation can be created.



'Ironically, Gordon Brown is one of the first to argue that the old style of fevered party activism must go'

So why, then, join the Labour Party? Because "we've got to find a way to reassert the importance of politics". A party, unlike a pressure group, has to be representative, has to be a coalition, and has to make decisions about allocating resources through a whole community. It must function in an age when "you can doubt the greater importance of watching the Nine O' clock News set against a conversation with neighbours". This long-term change means he'd like to see the party feeding its members with arguments to use against the daily views of the *Express* and *Sun*.

The problem about such socialist visions of mass, democratic participation is that they have in the past foundered on the socialist practice of the centralised state. And as he is pressing the need for supply side economics—where the supply of investment, research and development, and a skilled workforce shape the economy—does this not suggest a more powerful role for the central state in making that provision?

At this point he disappeared to discuss John Prescott's transport document. The answer, when he returned, lies in regional government, and "appropriate levels of decision making". As the editor of the influential Red Paper on Scotland (1975), and a Scot who acknowledges the importance of the even more influential Tom Nairn, he is obviously in sympathy with the arguments for a decentralised Britain. Yes, he thinks the UK will follow the pattern of a "Europe of the regions".

What he imagines is "an active state" (rather than, he says, "an enabling state") which will be accountable through new forms of local participation. (He's also quite taken with David Marquand's notion of "a developmental state".) This may mean regional enterprise boards and banks, ultimately accountable to regional assemblies, or may mean smaller communities—whatever seems appropriate. So where does the national state come in? In the provision of balance, he says. What is absurd is the congestion and pollution of the south east, set against the underemployment and forced migration of the north and Scotland.

But we cannot solve all these problems through "the old model of the nation state". If we're going to have any influence over global capital, particularly over financial markets, we've got to have international co-ordination in economic policy".

Gordon Brown spent the summer in Harvard exploring, amongst other things, "a new set of relationships betwen the market and the state". He appears incredulous that anyone can seriously think that privatisation, without changing anything else, can solve all the problems of eastern Europe. Hence the need to think through the new set of relationships. They have to deal with "the problem" of the unaccountable state. They have also to deal with what he thinks have been the failures of the market. Unlike many analysts of Thatcherism, he believes that the crisis at the end of the 1970s, which ushered in the Conservative decade, was partly provoked by market failures, as well as the "long-term failure of the British economy to modernise".

Yes, he is relentlessly economic when pressed on cultural and political issues. Yet, despite his reluctance to overstep his economic brief in public, it is also clear that he doesn't accept General Secretary Larry Whitty's view that constitutional and political reform is a marginal issue, and that Greens are "eminently rubbishable".

He's on the "green growth" wing, believing the priority is to devise methods of production which conserve energy and which eliminate harmful products. It is also clear that he thinks political and constitutional reform are essential if socialism is to become a winning voice. To fear that judges would subvert a Bill of Rights is yesterday's fight against their class power. To believe that the people must have a defence against the state is to embrace popular political rights—and that, thinks Gordon Brown—is the battle that has to be fought today. ●

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Positively unhealthy

Duncan Campbell and Nigel Townson uncover an intense and damaging campaign against orthodox treatments for Aids

Positively Healthy is at first sight a benign, if quirky, organisation which gives psychological support and information about alternative treatments to people who have or may develop Aids. It's run by Cass Mann, a self-acclaimed "healer", who wears costumes reminiscent of seaside fortune-tellers and a large egg-sized crystal around his neck. Mann has become a guru-like figure for a handful of patients and voluntary workers.

But there's a dark side to Mann which has led to suffering and confusion. Doctors and patients alike charge that Positively Healthy often exploits rather than ameliorates patients' worries, damaging their health and lives. Even so, he has remained highly plausible to respectable Aids organisations. Only five months ago the National Aids Trust gave Positively Healthy £10,000; the funds, he said afterwards, would go into his own pocket as "salary".

Cass Mann and "Positively Healthy" medical adviser Dr Michael Kirkman

Positively Healthy was set up in 1987 and at first earned a good reputation for its work. But the two founders who had genuine medical knowledge, both orthodox and alternative, have left and the organisation has largely become the personal vehicle for Mann, the remaining founder. Mann, who has no medical training, says he decided to move into healing after five years as the promoter of London's glitziest gay nightspot, the Embassy Club.

Mann has a strong and persuasive personality. Since January, he has waged an intense campaign against doctors and orthodox medical treatments for Aids—and especially against the use of the drug, AZT, the most efficacious treatment yet discovered. Mann has dismissed AZT as "poison" and orthodox medicine as "fascist science", on the grounds that doctors admit that people may actually die of Aids. Positively Healthy tells Aids patients to cure themselves with the cruel slogan: "There is no such thing as an incurable disease, only an incurable attitude (that held by the patient)." In place of orthodox treatments, Mann's organisation promotes vitamin pills, expensive quack remedies and worthless diet regimes, which are dangerous to their health.

"It strikes horror in me every time I hear that name," says Michael Howard, chief executive of Frontliners, the British organisation of people who have Aids. "Emotionally and mentally, Positively Healthy's activities do damage to very vulnerable people. He won't let people make up their own minds... The amount of quackery that is involved with Positively Healthy is a real menace."

Positively Healthy has admitted in print that it has been warned "to stop interfering in the progress" of clinical trials at British hospitals, by urging Aids patients to switch from effective drugs to vitamin pills. Mann markets these pills as "IMU-POWER PACK", and claims that taking them will "boost and strengthen the immune system". His advertisements quote a "Positively Healthy Powerline" (in fact, Mann's home telephone number) and urge patients to order £90 packs, which are simply tubs of over 1,200 assorted pills to be taken 13 times daily.

It is a criminal offence to advertise claims that any substance can cure or alleviate disease, as Mann does, unless it has a licence under the Medicines Act. Mann has no licence. Although the pills are described as "supplements", they are sold as a medicine which is said to alleviate the life-threatening immune deficiencies Aids patients face. Challenged, Mann could provide no medical or scientific evidence to show that his pills would have the claimed effects.

Mann claims only to make 10 per cent profit from selling the pills and says he offers patients a discount on shop prices. But he has also registered his IMU-POWER packs and the alleged therapeutic system of which they are supposed to be part, "Immunutrition", as commercial trademarks for "Positively Healthy Ltd"—a company which does not in fact exist.

Janet Thorn, senior lecturer in nutrition at Oxford Polytechnic, recently attended a lecture by Mann on "Nutrition and Aids". "He told everybody that AZT was poison. He said people should stop using AZT and take nutritional supplements instead." Mann did not know that a professional nutritionist was in the audience and went on to spell out his "treatment". Thorn was "horrified". "He's charismatic and a wonderful salesman—but he is a witch doctor really. The claims he makes are quite fraudulent from the nutritional point of view."

Thorn is one of five doctors and nutrition experts, both "alternative" and orthodox, who have confirmed that the dietary advice published by Positively Healthy is likely to make Aids patients undernourished and more at risk of illness and death. Dr David Pearson, senior clinical immunologist at the University Hospital of South Manchester, had to intervene personally after Manchester Aids counsellors were persuaded to advise patients to follow Mann's Immunutrition programme. "Our dietician was

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horrified by what she read, "Pearson says. "It is pseudo-science and scaremongering nonsense which does more harm than good."

The doctors' fears appear to be confirmed by several cases we know of. For example, a 26-year-old man, who scrupulously followed every tenet of Mann's advice, has recently died six months after contracting Aids. Two friends independently told us that they believed his unusually short lifespan with the disease could be connected with advice received from Positively Healthy. One of Britain's Aids specialists told us, "six months is now an unusually short survival time for anyone with good access to the latest therapies"—which he had, but rejected.

Mann noticed him swallow an AZT capsule and demanded: "Why are you poisoning yourself?"

Mann has promoted other worthless and dangerous treatments. He sent dozens of Aids and HIV patients for treatment to Yves Delatte, the so-called inventor of a quack cure for Aids, Delta Te, and five months ago gave Delatte a platform at a Positively Healthy public meeting. Delta Te, as we have revealed (*NSS*, 16 June), is a dangerous mixture of starch with human faecal bacteria.

Mann has also joined forces with Dr Michael Kirkman, who is now Positively Healthy's "medical adviser". Kirkman, although a registered medical practitioner and a former Army medical officer, is a failed businessman who is exploiting a diagnostic technique in a questionable fashion to prescribe expensive, but worthless, vitamin pills and supplements. Kirkman is fairly easily seen through. He first tried to gain access to Aids patients through Frontliners, but Michael Howard immediately sent him packing. But Mann has advertised and promoted Kirkman's "Blood Ionic Analysis and Therapy" (BIAT) and "Optimum Nutrition" systems to Aids patients. He has described them as "vital... the key to survival with Aids".

We have obtained samples of Kirkman's BIAT reports. Professor Vincent Marks, head of biochemistry at Surrey University, has carefully examined the data. BIAT, he says, is "quackery", "charlatanism", "gobbledegook ... being used to promote treatment when there is no indication whatsover that treatment is required". Both Kirkman and Mann have also urged Aids and HIV patients to buy and use "Organic Germanium", a medically useless poison we have exposed (*NSS*, 8 September).

But the most dangerous part of Mann's activities has been a one-sided campaign to stop patients taking the drug AZT. Mann denies conducting such a campaign, and claims only to give advice about the drug's possible side-effects. But the evidence that he is trying to stop patients using AZT is very strong and comes from many independent sources.

Richard Barker, a member of the Aids Community Research Organisation, recalls the first time he met Mann. Mann noticed him swallow an AZT capsule and demanded, "Why are you poisoning yourself?" Barker had to justify taking the drug to Mann, and informed him that he was well aware of the advantages and disadvantages. "I know of three people who have stopped AZT because of him," Barker says. He also describes the case of a patient who nearly went totally blind after Mann "discouraged" him from using the proper treatment drug, called DHPG. Like other powerful and effective drugs, DHPG has toxic side-effects. Mann urged the patient not to take it. The patient accepted the advice—then changed his mind after he started to go blind, and has thereby avoided complete blindness. Barker says: "If he had had the drug early, he could have had the chance of saving his sight entirely"—an observation Aids doctors confirm.

A leading Aids specialist in London also informed us of the harm done to a patient who was advised by Mann that "he should never have gone on AZT". The patient stopped taking AZT, took germanium instead and "went on to to get Aids". Two weeks ago, the doctor (who has asked us not to give his name) received two telephone calls at work from Mann, claiming that he had consulted a barrister and requiring him (the doctor) to "clarify" what he had told us. The doctor felt intimidated and distressed by the call.

Mann also assisted a *Sunday Times* journalist, Brian Deer, to publicise damaging and inaccurate allegations about an important British-French trial of AZT, known as "Concorde", and to attack the reputations of Aids doctors. Mann offered inducements to a woman HIV patient who made unchecked allegations against her doctors, which Deer then reported; these allegations have now proved to be false. Deer also tried to suggest that doctors running the trial are in the pay of Wellcome, the manufacturer of AZT.

Deer rang Dr Ian Weller, Aids consultant at London's Middlesex Hospital, early in March and directly accused him of receiving funds from Wellcome. When Weller denied this, Deer asked him to admit that "this epidemic is a godsend to you". Weller has cared for hundreds of Aids patients since the epidemic began in Britain: a heart-rending task. He says he was "devastated" and hurt by Deer's "onslaught" and "felt like giving up" his work on Aids. Deer cannot remember what he said.

At about the same time, Stuart Marshall, editor of *Positively Healthy News*, travelled to Vancouver where Dr Karen Gelmon, joint coordinator with Weller of the Concorde trial, had previously been a prominent Aids physician. Marshall approached members of the Vancouver People with Aids Coalition on the "pretext", as they saw it, of making a video programme on alternative therapies. According to Greig Layne of the PWA Coalition, Marshall asked him to help Positively Healthy "expose Dr Gelmon" and "implied she had been bought off by Wellcome". But Dr Gelmon is highly

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Hiding behind a plastic bag is Dr Kirkman, founder of the Kirkman-Bach College of Human Ethology, president of the Stress Control Institute, Count de Buwagan, Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Teutonic Order of the Levant, president of the International Institute for Vitamin and Mineral Therapy, medical consultant to the Aetherius Society, and Academic Dean of the College of Applied Science of the (non-existent) North West London University

respected in Vancouver and Marshall was given the brush-off. We have asked Marshall to explain who funded his trip to Vancouver, why he went, and when the video programme will be shown. He hasn't answered.

Deer finally published two *Sunday Times* articles accusing Concorde trial doctors of "serious breaches of scientific and ethical practice". He wrote that patients were being put "under pressure" to take part in the trial; were not informed about "potentially fatal" side-effects; and had not given informed consent to taking the drug. He cited only a single case where this was alleged to have happened, to a 21-year-old patient at "a large North London hospital", who was identified as "Susan". Deer claimed that, "despite repeatedly asking for details of side-effects," she "was not offered the information sheet nor an 'informed consent' form, leaving her to take AZT in worried ignorance." This was "malpractice or negligence" which left the doctors concerned "open to legal action".

Deer's allegations are without foundation. AZT can have serious side-effects, but is not recognised as being "potentially fatal". Neither Deer nor anyone else on the *Sunday Times* made any contact with the doctors he accused of malpractice. We have spoken to the doctors who have asked for their names not to be disclosed. Susan, in fact, signed a standard consent form on 26 September 1988. The first paragraph reads,"I have read and understood the patient information sheet". What did she know of the risks she was taking? The form says: "I understand the risks and potential benefits of the study." Susan was counselled on three separate occasions about the risks and benefits of taking the drug, and her counselling was actually videotaped for training purposes. When interviewed, Susan said that she remained "satisfied" with her doctor and treatment. She continues to this day to be treated by the same doctor Deer alleged she accused of "malpractice".

So why did Susan reportedly make these allegations to the *Sunday Times*? She had been put in touch with Mann by another voluntary organisation after expressing anxieties about possible side-effects. Susan spoke to Mann and then telephoned Dr Gelmon to complain and came off AZT. She took Delta Te instead. Mann, doctors learned, had arranged for Susan to get a free supply of Delta Te as an inducement or reward for talking to Deer.

Delatte has confirmed in a recorded interview with us that he began supplying Susan with Delta Te before the first *Sunday Times* report was published. Delatte gave Susan's real name and admitted that she received her supply free of charge, others paid up to £500 a month.

Deer says he is not a member of Positively Healthy and has not relied on material supplied by Mann for his reports on AZT. He claims to have no knowledge of any individual such as Delatte offering a miracle cure and describes our account as "extraordinary". Alex Studholme, a reporter on the *Bucks Free Press*, Delatte's local paper has a different recollection. After Delatte was exposed as a crook, Delatte told Studholme that he knew Deer and was expecting or hoping for "a sympathetic article" by Deer in the *Sunday Times*. Studholme then telephoned Deer, who confirmed that he "knew about Yves Delatte" and was "thinking about" writing an article.

Deer also wrote that five patients other than Susan had provided the newspaper with "similarly alarming tales". Some had been "confronted by groups of up to five doctors", demanding their participation in the Concorde trial. But an investigation by the Medical Research Council could find no patients who had been treated in this way.

None of the Concorde trial doctors believes that their trial is "free of problems", or that individual patients may not have cause for complaint or lose confidence in the treatment. But the events Deer reported appear, on investigation, never to have happened. Dr Weller says that, after reading his article, "patients wanted to drop out", damaging the trial.

The National Aids Trust said this week that Mann has been invited to a meeting to review his recent activities. A spokesperson added that the Trust "views with grave concern recent reports". The danger of Positively Healthy's activities has been that what is presented as impartial and "controversial" information-giving is actually dogmatic and determined advocacy. Mann, a powerful figure, has exploited the vulnerability of people confronted by a life-threatening disease, and undermined their confidence in the most effective treatments yet known to promote worthless, dangerous and expensive alternatives. Mann and those around him claim, not without justice, that doctors exploit their privileged status and special knowledge to enjoy power over patients' lives, health and personal feelings. They have been playing the same deadly game. ●

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POLITICAL COLUMN

Punitive farce

It is possible to make sense of the government's policy towards higher education. By laughing at it

R W Johnson

Of all areas of government policy, education is the most puzzling, and of all areas of education policy it is the government's attitude towards higher education that is the most stupefying. That is, it's possible to make some sense of government policy towards the schools if one assumes that the hidden agenda is to push parents towards the private sector, empower rich sponsors and parents against the teachers, and break the power of the teaching unions.

But none of these factors can be adduced to explain the government's continuing war on the universities; indeed, to the extent that the government's policy is to vaunt the polys over the universities, its aim appears to be one of pushing demand towards the sector with least private funding and the most powerful unions.

The elitist tradition of British universities makes them sitting ducks for political attack. (A personal example: while I was abroad this column carried an attack on me by Patricia Hewitt, alleging "Oxbridge snobbery". She made no attempt to substantiate her charge—that I taught at Oxford was, for her, proof enough. Such abuse just goes with the job.) But that elitist tradition also made the universities major export-earners, both in the immediate form of foreign student fees and in diffuse spin-off effects later on. Moreover, at least until the Thatcherite attack on the universities began to destroy whole departments and faculties, British universities had a clear competitive edge in the international marketplace on their Japanese, German and American competitors. Of how many other British industries was that true? Even now higher education can increase its exports almost at will: provide more resources and the sector will almost effortlessly attract more foreign students. How many other industries can do this?

More centrally, higher education is simply the key to the nation's whole economic future. When one sees a society as brutally utilitarian as South Korea aiming to provide higher education to 90 per cent of its post-school-age group, it ought to be clear enough that the traditional British philistinism towards higher education (Kingsley Amis's "more means worse") is something we can no longer afford. South Korea's deadly serious intent is to be a vanguard nation of the 21st century. If we want to be full citizens of that world, too, we have to take higher education—indeed, all education—as seriously as they do in Seoul, Tokyo or Singapore.

What has happened under Thatcher almost beggars belief. For year after year, the education portfolio was confided to Sir Keith Joseph, a man who actually volunteered such extreme cuts in education spending that even Thatcher had sometimes to overrule him: a man whose eugenic theories about working-class reproduction were offensive and risible in equal measure; a man of breast-beating principle and wild, disturbing eyes. Inevitably, terrible damage was inflicted upon higher education under Joseph: underfunding, demoralisation, the slashing of research and library expenditures, tough limits on student numbers, endless spending cuts, the flight into exile of many of our best and brightest—trends that have now set in like a sort of academic nuclear winter.

Many believed it would be unsafe to buy a new car from Robert Jackson, let alone a second-hand one

Incredibly, the age of Joseph has been followed by something even worse—the age of Jackson. Those who knew Robert Jackson in his student days remember him as a man of perverse ability, extreme and gross in his ideas and ambitions alike. Such judgments were, moreover, thoroughly bipartisan: for over a decade Jackson hawked himself around one Tory constituency after another, meeting a long string of often indignant rejections.

For while Sir Keith, mad though he was, was wont, from time to time, to betray some human origins, the same could not be said of Jackson. Jackson was, indeed, so supernaturally disagreeable that some believed he was afraid to turn round for fear of revealing a control panel in his back. His willingness to stand logic on its head, and to argue full-face against the facts, led many to believe it would be unsafe to buy a new car from Jackson, let alone a second-hand one. Only someone wishing to wreak some terrible revenge upon the higher education system could ever have appointed Jackson as its minister—yet this is what was done. (A note of levity, I admit, creeps in: it is impossible for anyone working in higher education to take the situation seriously.)

Let one example of Jackson's management style suffice: at the end of the last university term the University Funding Council sent out a circular inaugurating an entire new system of higher education, with provision for universities and polys to bid against one another in a Dutch auction for students, the reduction of degree courses to two years, the doubling of teaching loads, and so forth. All replies to the circular had to be in by mid-September, a timetable clearly intended to be impossible for any institution to follow, leaving Jackson and the UFC a free hand to wreak yet further havoc.

Meanwhile, Jackson has spent the summer writing interminable letters to newspapers "proving" that there have never been such things as a brain drain or education cuts, and also that black is white and vice versa.

But why should one want to damage higher education so much? Why, for example, do such terrible harm to British science? One Thatcher education adviser I put this question to replied that Madam felt that British scientists had been only too good at the sort of work which earned Nobel Prizes, and not good enough at the practical applications. The fact that this was obviously the fault of businessmen, not scientists, cut no ice: Madam felt the scientists had to be punished till they saw the light.

I put the same question to a Tory newspaper editor: why inflict such terrible damage on the universities? Look, he said, the universities are seen as the last redoubt of the 60s radicals, the sort of people who brought in the permissive society and so forth. People like that—like you really—have to be starved out. That's the idea, although of course it's not polite to say so. Only when that's been done can a new breed of Thatcherite intellectuals be put in place. The universities will have to wait till then to see better days.

What these two answers have in common is punitive intent. Comment on such reasoning seems otiose, except that it explains a lot more than Jackson's letters to the paper do. Perhaps I'm better off not taking the whole thing seriously.

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As doctors and ministers scrap over NHS reform, new ideas on the nation's health go unheard. This special Society section restores the links between health and citizenship. First, London GP Steve Iliffe warns that a defence of the status quo is not enough. We also look at a potential revolution in women's reproductive rights, and plot shifting patterns of disease. And a variety of voices—from Kenneth Clarke to Esther Rantzen—give their prescriptions for a healthy future

Beyond the doctors' orders

Exhausted by televised sparring between Kenneth Clarke and the BMA brass? Couldn't spot a hospital trust if it opted out in front of you? Reduced to migraine by the very thought of an internal market? You have White Paper Fatigue Syndrome, the new malaise sweeping the Tory backbenches and the health professions too. Its origins are obvious but its course and outcome remain uncertain. Forget the vitamins, forget the herbs, and do not swallow the more apocalyptic prognoses—end of the NHS or alternatively end of Thatcher-

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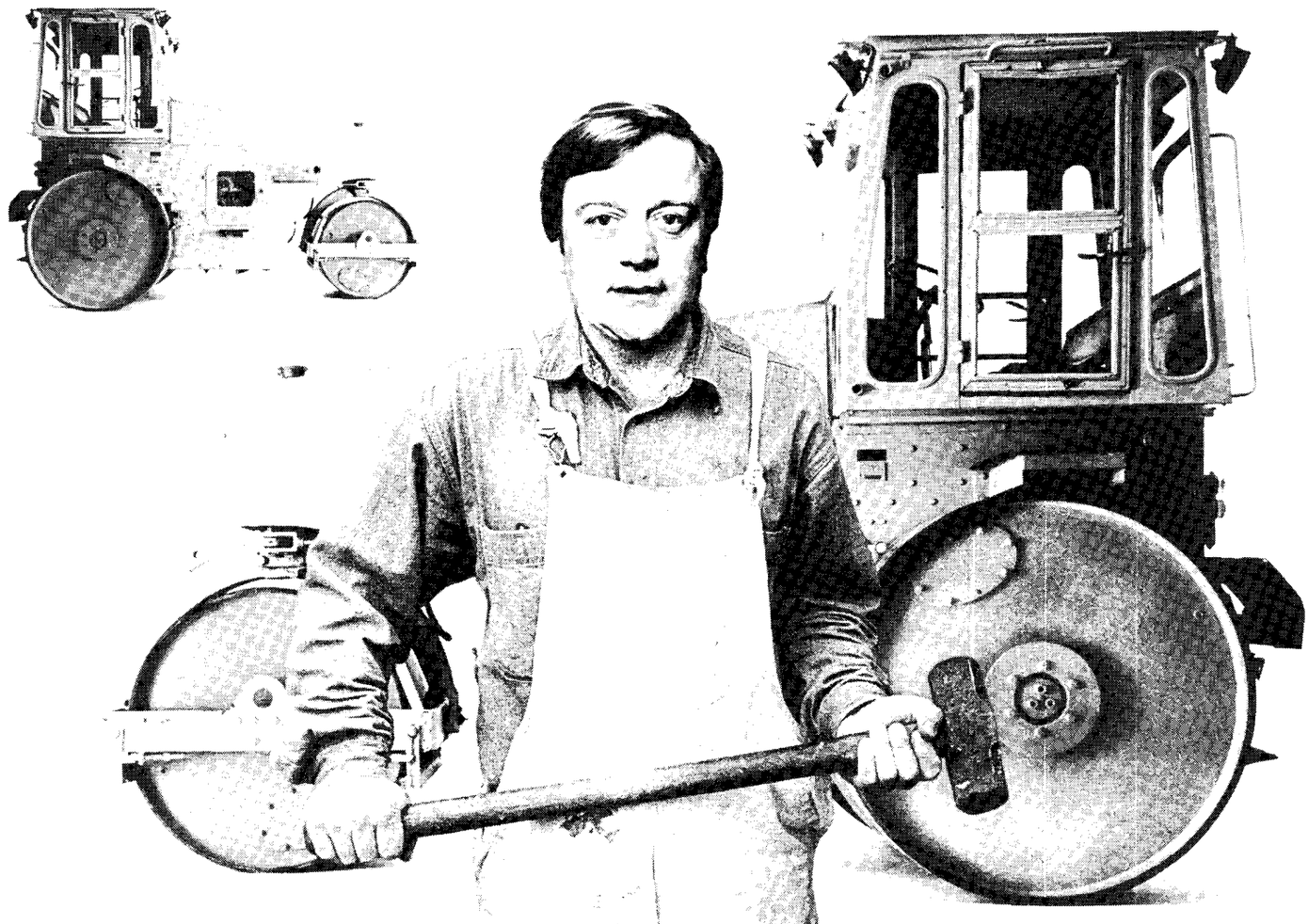

Michael Bennett

ism—but instead let politics take its course by concentrating on four simple thoughts.

First, there is more to Kenneth Clarke's plans than market ideology. They attempt, however weakly and naively, to address real problems within the NHS. Second, should this "reform" be railroaded through parliament the NHS will take a beating, but it will gain something too. Third, if the campaign to thwart the white paper and the new GP contract is successful, it could preserve the NHS but at the price of a fourth term of Conservatism. Finally, if Labour forms the next government, the success of the professions in resisting Thatcher may make future reforms of the NHS more difficult.

The commonplace view that Thatcherism steals the left's ideas and distorts them is true of *Working for Patients* and of the proposed new contract for family doctors. We rarely pursue that view to its conclusions. What kind of ideas can be so stolen and distorted? Does Thatcherism steal the idea of nationalisation of industries, for example, or of sanctions against apartheid? Apparently they are unconvertible.

But devolution of NHS control, targeting of populations for preventive care, patient-centred medicine, annual reports of work done, rational prescribing, accountability, audit and health promotion are all ideas that have been lifted from the language of "progressive" NHS thinking and blended with management, consumerism and the market. Perhaps, then, the ideas were not stolen, but were previously shared and ambiguous. Once socialists suspect common ground between right and left they are left with a political dilemma—could the right be right?—and heresy appears. It is easier to accuse the Tories of theft of our intellectual property, and fall back on the simple belief that they are nothing but malevolent ideologists.

"If the campaign to thwart the white paper is successful, it could preserve the NHS at the price of a fourth term of Conservatism"

Unfortunately the NHS is in important respects both over-sized and over-centralised. It tends to see trees but not woods, and it objectifies individuals as a matter of routine. The work done by professionals is assumed to be necessary and its outcomes are taken to be beneficial. Actual measurement of people's needs, and of the success or failure of treatments or services, remains the exceptional practice. It may even be anathema to those providing the service.

Kenneth Clarke's plans will fail to resolve these problems in an equitable and effective way. But they *are* attempts to deal with real issues. Worse heresy still, while market dogma poisons all this reformist thinking from the right, there is little alternative on the left. For example, socialists offer "democratic control" of the NHS, but mean local government and trades union membership of controlling bodies. If that membership came from a thriving tradition of involvement, the offer might have more appeal.

Equally, the notions that "prevention is better than cure" and that we have "a National Sickness Service not a Health Service" lead on to endorsement of preventive medicine, health

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promotion, screening and check-ups. The idea that professionals could go out and stop people getting ill, rather than salvage them when they do, has immense appeal to that wide streak of omnipotence within medicine.

Sometimes the idea is true, but the astonishingly poor return from much preventive work might make wiser people more cautious. Unfortunately for us all, the politics of the NHS is dominated on all sides by medical practices more ideological than scientific. In short, the definition of health care has been captured by its professional "producers". Hence the BMA advert that says: "What do you call a man who ignores medical advice? Mr Clarke."

Working for Patients threatens capture by producers, partly because it comes from a mean tradition that begrudges every penny of public money spent on those in need, and partly because it is a managers' charter. At long last the managers are being given real tools with which they can reshape professional power in the NHS. Or so they think. In practice, tight cash limits and market forces may prove a worse obstacle to change than curmudgeonly doctors, but NHS managers are a naive body and must learn the hard way.

If the proposed reforms are made into law the "clinical freedom" of professionals will be weakened, which is one reason why the BMA is bombarding the government from the billboards. Perhaps we should hope for only a limited victory, with "clinical freedom" an early and fatal casualty. It is time for reductionist medical thinking underpinned by pharmaceutical industry money to give way to something broader and less commercially influenced.

Other advantages may emerge from the conflict. They include the definition of NHS core services and the separation of provider and supplier functions within its controlling bodies. Both ideas could be recaptured from the right. Annual reports, notional drug budgets and the wide introduction of computerisation in general practice offer us the chance of a revolutionary change within front-line services. Of course, many of the government's ideas, like hospital trusts and practice budgets, must die if benefits have any chance of offsetting losses.

The absence of other serious combatants, apart from the BMA, should alert us to the risk of a Conservative tactical withdrawal that just about saves the NHS, while giving Mrs Thatcher (or her successor) the fourth term. The trade unions, with honourable exceptions, sit on their hands and watch the BMA.

The Labour Party's summer campaign of postcard protests culminates at next week's conference. Its policy review statements hint at a different vision from the surgeon's perspective so beloved of Mr Clarke (see *NSS*, 19 May). These are hopeful signs, but we should be circumspect about substantial change in the NHS even if Labour wins the next election. A Labour government will move into position behind the BMA which, although tired and impoverished by three years of close-quarter fighting with a rough government, will be triumphant, confident and politically much the wiser.

An injection of public money will smooth away the problems for a time. Undoing the worst of the Tory reforms will occupy political minds for a while. But the over-centralised service with its in-built inflexibilities will remain. So too will the population of the "worried well" interested in bringing their anxieties to professionals, the growing number of very elderly and dependent people, the battered populations of declining industrial areas, and the desperate underclass of the inner cities.

The pharmaceutical industry will press home its prescribable solutions. The commercial sector (strengthened by British buy-outs of US commercial hospitals) will continue to recruit both NHS staff and the most articulate and critical NHS patients. And a new health minister will compete for Treasury funds with all the other deserving causes.

That new government must launch its own plans to reform the health service. It will have to bring the drugs industry under control, and begin to help us change from passive recipients of medical expertise to active citizens safeguarding health. It must demand value for money, and cost all the opportunities missed within the health service because of backwardness, professional pride, public indifference or lack of imagination. It must renew the deteriorating buildings and rebuild staff morale.

How long will that take? Two years? Two terms? Two decades? We cannot even think about it, so great is the need to demolish *Working for Patients*. Yet if we do not think about it now, perhaps we never shall. With that sobering conclusion, all your symptoms of White Paper Fatigue Syndrome vanish, and you regain a sense of qualified optimism about the future.

Steve Iliffe is the author of Strong Medicine: Health politics for the twenty-first century (Lawrence and Wishart)

Whose right to choose?

Claire Sanders reports on the battle over the "abortion pill"

The word choice, which has long run through the debate on abortion like a rusty motif, has been given a fresh lease of life. There is a new drug on offer, mifepristone or RU 486 (otherwise known as the "abortion pill"), which enables women to have an abortion without surgery. The drug conforms to two central tenets of the government's NHS proposals: it offers women consumer choice in the form of a new treatment and is cheaper than present methods.

But in the face of opposition from the anti-abortion lobby, Roussel, the company that developed the drug, has yet to apply for a licence to manufacture it in this country. It took government intervention before RU 486 could be successfully introduced in France. In America, where there is the sort of market for health care that the government would like here, it is not available.

Dr Etienne-Emile Baulieu, the French physician who pioneered the development of RU 486, is not bashful about its implications: "Abortion... should more or less disappear as a concept, as a fact, as a word in the future." This is not quite true. The treatment cannot be used for women who are more than two months pregnant. But for those who visit a doctor in time it requires just three trips and results in what is effectively a heavy, and sometimes painful, period.

Surgery, which carries a 1 to 2 per cent risk of uterine perforation, infection and haemorrhage, is avoided. By the end of this year the drug will have been used by 70,000 women throughout the world. Recent research from Roussel shows a 95 per cent success rate for the drug among 1,000 British women at 14 hospitals.

Popperfoto

Innovator in birth control: Dr Etienne-Emile Baulieu has fought hard for the use of RU 486 in France

Dr Sheila Abdullah was one of the GPs who took part in trials for the drug at her Sheffield clinic. She describes the delay in its introduction as "one more way that women are being denied the proper services they need". Women in Sheffield now face waiting lists for abortions. Although the 1967 Abortion Act legalised abortions it placed no requirement on health authorities to provide them. The service has always been patchy—79 per cent of legal abortions were performed on the NHS in East Anglia in 1987, compared to under 20 per cent in the West Midlands. In the UK as a whole nearly half of all legal abortions in 1987 were done privately. At best there is a three-week wait on the NHS, more normally a six-week one.

David Paintin, reader in obstetrics and gynaecology at St Mary's hospital in London and

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David Paintin, reader in obstetrics and gynaecology at St Mary's hospital in London and chairman of the Birth Control Trust, has called for changes in the abortion law and services. "The arrival of the abortion pill should provide an opportunity to improve the service," he says. He wants a specific budget allocated to abortions. Health authorities could then provide clinics where women could walk in and be treated promptly. At present very few health authorities have specific budgets. Abortions are performed by hospital gynaecologists and the money comes from a general gynaecology budget.

The anti-abortion lobby in this country is worried by RU486. Phyllis Bowman, director of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, has said, "We want to see the abortion law tightened up in this country and this drug is going to make people think it's easy to have one." The drug poses particular problems for the pro-life lobby. Depending on the way it is taken, RU 486 can work in exactly the same way as the contraceptive pill and the IUD. Because it induces menstruation, RU 486 prevents a fertilised egg from being implanted in the uterine wall (although it also causes already-implanted eggs to be shed).

This is what happens with contraceptive pills which contain a low dose of hormone: they don't always suppress ovulation but instead prevent the fertilised egg from implanting in the uterus. The IUD usually works by irritating the uterus and preventing implantation. If a woman took RU 486 within eight days of fertilisation, it would do precisely what the IUD does, and what the pill sometimes does: prevent implantation. For this reason Baulieu now prefers to call the pill a contragestive—for counter-gestation, as opposed to the more emotionally loaded "abortifacient".

These complexities have not stopped the anti-abortion lobby in America. In the past few years large drug companies have virtually abandoned efforts to develop new drugs for contraception and abortion. This withdrawal from the field is due only in part to the work of the pro-life lobby. It is also a result of high research costs, relatively low potential profit and the enormous risk that liability suits present to a diversified company in America.

The law suits following the introduction of Dalkon Shields and Copper-7 IUDs have meant that many companies have abandoned the field. In the early 1970s—when abortion became legal in the US—there were eight major US firms doing research into family planning methods: now there is one. The US government spends less than 0.2 per cent of its research budget on contraceptive studies. Politicians don't like to fall foul of the anti-abortion lobby, although according to a recent poll by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 59 per cent thought RU 486 should be available.

It was the threat of a boycott of the goods of Roussel's parent company, Hoechst, that finally led it to withdraw the pill from the French market last October. The boycott threatened to cripple Hoechst's $6 billion a year American subsidiary. "We witnessed an orchestrated campaign," said Pierre Joly, vice chairman of Roussel, which included threatening letters to the families of executives.

Then the French Health Minister, Claude Evin, intervened: "I could not permit the abortion debate to deprive women of a product that represents medical progress." He went on: "I was doing what I could to make sure France did not surrender to pressure groups animated by archaic ideologies."

It is hard to imagine the present Conservative government making such a stand. It has always tried to be seen as not encouraging abortions in this country: one reason why so many women are forced to go to private clinics. The government has no plans to speed the British introduction of RU 486. According to the Department of Health: "It is too early to say whether there are any particular plans to change the abortion service as it stands. Private medicine will continue to play a part."

What women want is a choice of treatment and easily accessible services—not a choice between a speedy service they pay for and a slow one that they don't.

The Birth Control Trust is organising a conference on RU486 on 26 October. Details are available from: Wendy Smith, 01-580 9360

Talking cures

Polly Neate asked: "What changes in health policy would you like?"

London Features International

"Our work on *That's Life* has made us only too aware of the desperate shortage of organs—particularly kidneys—for transplantation. We know that many bereaved families welcome the chance to save another life by making this most precious gift. The donor cards do not work: I believe it is time to introduce 'required request legislation', so that hospitals would be required by law to put the request to families.

"We have also investigated the plight of the mentally ill and know that when psychiatric hospitals are closed, all too often that simply means patients are thrown on the streets with no proper community care. The Griffiths report stresses the importance of support for carers and strongly advocates a Minister for Community Care.

"I would like to see both these recommendations taken up by the government as soon as possible."

Esther Rantzen

TELEVISION PRESENTER

"I would like to see the government develop a policy for health and not just illness services. Measures to improve the adequacy of illness services are totally irrelevant when the government is pursuing health-endangering policies in industry, agriculture, commerce, economics and every other area of public policy-making."

Dr John Morrissey

CONVENOR, GREEN PARTY HEALTH POLICY WORKING GROUP

"First, we need a fully-funded National Health Service. Because of the underfunding under both Labour and Conservative administrations, although worse in the last eight years, we need to dedicate at least 8 or 9 per cent of our GNP to building up the health service for the next ten years.

"Secondly, I think we need pilot studies in different districts to look at different ways of administering, and in particular at the relationship between the regional and district levels. Thirdly, we need to look at the function of the Department of Health, which I think should be removed from any kind of funding decisions and should be really dealing with policy decisions, so that funding is on a per capita basis, directly to the health authorities."

Wendy Savage

SURGEON AND SENIOR LECTURER IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY, THE LONDON HOSPITAL

"Innovation based on rigorous assessment. The NHS has been dominated by central decisions imposed with little experiment or evaluatiuon. Wide-sweeping decisions have been taken, often on gut-feeling, with three NHS reorganisations causing disruption and confusion.

"We must study well defined objectives on a limited scale before taking irreversible action. Trials in one of the 15 English health regions could reveal whether substantial extra resources could improve health; could test whether 'competition' benefited patients; and assess the desirability of investment in electronic information systems. Only then should we pursue an otherwise possibly disastrous course for our health."

Dr Stephen Lock

EDITOR, BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL

"Above all, more money. At present we are trying to get a clinical quart out of a fiscal pint pot and inevitably failing. Two per cent more GNP to health, preferably switched from our inappropriately large 'defence' budget, would improve morale and quality of care tremendously. The proposed administrative gimmicks will do the reverse."

Dr David Widgery

EAST END GP AND WRITER

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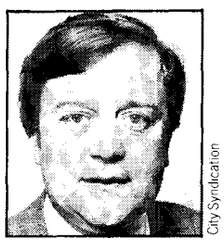
"What I would like to see is a genuine commitment to the coordination of all caring services that recognises the role of the voluntary organisations as equal partners in the overall strategy of medical care."
Martin Eede
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST

"An abolition of waiting lists, which is certainly possible. The idea that waiting lists are an integral part of the NHS is quite incorrect. They could easily be abolished. It requires two things: money and organisation."
Sam Galbraith
LABOUR MP AND NEUROSURGEON

"Older people are major users of the health service. It is vitally important that their needs are assessed and addressed along with those of the rest of the population. Equitable distribution of resources, based on an analysis of numbers, is essential if older people are to receive comprehensive care."
Sally Greengross
DIRECTOR, AGE CONCERN ENGLAND

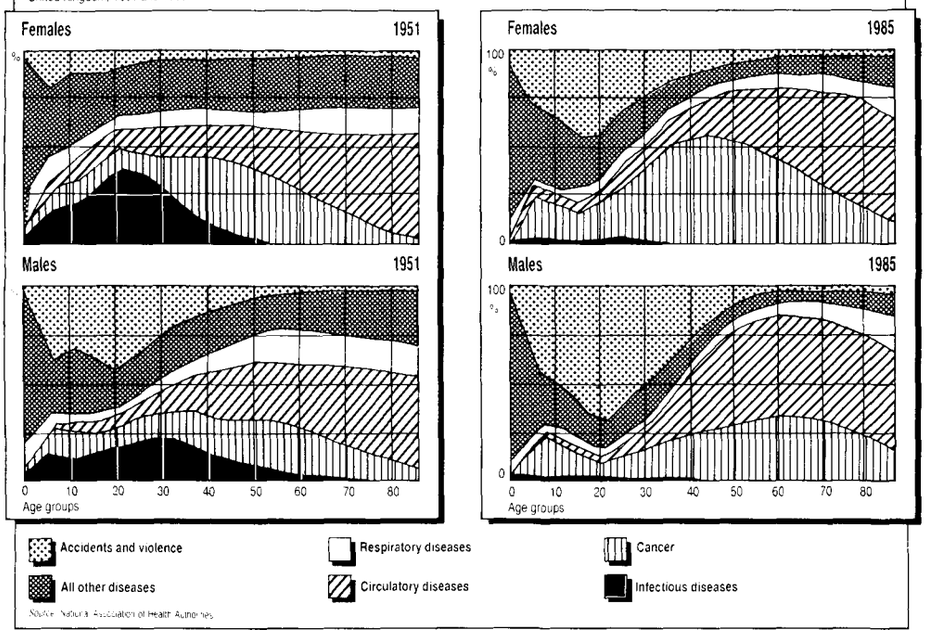
"It isn't difficult to provide good health care for those on middle incomes or above. The real test of any change is whether it copes as well or better with absolute disasters—long-term diseases, illnesses of age and mental handicap."
Roger Poole
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR, NUPE

"The most important thing is that we can achieve what the government wants without this upheaval. We need to obtain information on all aspects of NHS costings, through an extension of the Resource Management Initiative, after proper evaluation, and further provide properly funded and clinically led medical audit, so that resources can be allocated more fairly to meet patients' demands. I would like to remove the untried and untested parts of the white paper, such as internal markets, self-governing hospitals and GP budgets. Finally, we want an improvement in the funding of the NHS."
Dr John Marks
CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL, BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION


City Syndication

"The change I would most like to see is a better NHS which pays more attention to the patients' wishes and which provides a consistently high quality service in every part of the country. I would like a health service which is better run and therefore able to offer better care. I want doctors, nurses and managers at local level to be able to respond better to local needs."
Kenneth Clarke MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HEALTH

Figure 1: Selected causes of death by sex and age
United Kingdom, 1951 and 1985



Source: National Association of Health Authorities

Tony Garrett

Death watch

Virginia Beardshaw plots changes in the things that make us sick

In Britain, debate on health policy traditionally takes place within a very narrow compass, defined since early this year by the furore surrounding *Working for Patients*, and the promise of a white paper on community care this autumn. Just now, it is particularly hard to step back, widen the focus, and take in the broader back-drop to the day-to-day dramas of health care delivery and the fight for resources.

Changing patterns of health and disease are part of this wider picture. By now, the fact that the last hundred years have seen a dramatic decline in infectious diseases is common knowledge. Tuberculosis, typhoid, smallpox and a host of other 19th and early 20th century scourges are all but things of the past. TB, for instance, killed around 4,000 women aged 35-44 per million in 1870. By 1960, that figure was 30 per million: more than a 99 per cent drop.

Improved nutrition, higher real incomes, better living and working conditions and effective public health measures have brought this change about, although the application of effective drug treatments from the late 1940s also made a contribution. So have immunisation strategies, as illustrated by the 25-year absence of poliomyelitis epidemics from western developed countries.

As a result of the decline in infectious diseases, this century has seen a drop in infant, child and young adult mortality leading to an increase in life expectancy. This, coupled with declining fertility, is responsible for the proportional increase of people aged 65+ in the population which is such a marked feature of the post-war period. However, the improvements in health in the last 40 years have been most impressive in the first years of life: life expectancy of people of working age and in retirement has increased much less (see figure 2).

As infectious diseases have declined, the "20th century epidemics" of coronary heart disease (CHD) and cancers have taken their place as the major causes of premature death. Figure 1 gives an indication of how patterns have shifted between 1951 and 1985, with a dramatic decline in the importance of infectious disease, and a consequent rise in CHD, other diseases of the circulatory system and cancers. In comparison with other industrialised countries, Britain's record on death rates from CHD and many cancers is poor. Although CHD rates have begun to decline since the late 1970s, this fall has occurred later and been smaller than in many comparable countries.

As life expectancy has increased, so too has the incidence of chronic disabling conditions of later life, such as arthritis, bronchitis, Parkinson's disease and dementia. This is not to say that infectious diseases can simply be written off: the emergence of Aids in this decade, with 1,352 British deaths by August 1989, and the continuing threat of death and severe disability from conditions like meningitis make that clear. However, their contribution to national disease and death rates is currently slight, despite the suffering they cause to individuals and their families.

This general pattern is common to the western developed world. Indeed, heart disease and cancers are often referred to as "diseases of affluence". The term has a certain built-in irony, since these conditions affect poor people within rich countries disproportionately—just as infectious diseases did in the past. There is a close association between social deprivation and risks to health of all types, as Peter Townsend argues in this issue. It seems increasingly likely that a constellation of factors, including poor living and

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Figure 2a: Death rate of infants under 1 year per 1,000 live births, and live birth rates per 1,000 population

England and Wales, 1841 to 1980

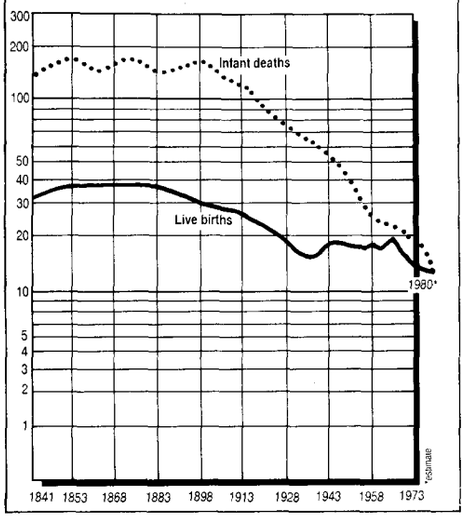
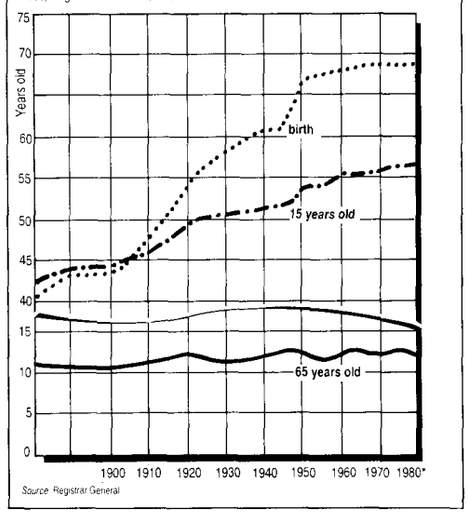


Figure 2b: Life expectancy, as extra years to live, at birth, at 15 years and at 65 years old

Males, England and Wales, 1880 to 1980



Source: Registrar General

working conditions, low incomes, unemployment, limited social support and lack of control over life circumstances contributes to this vulnerability.

This transition from acute infectious diseases to chronic, degenerative and (often) disabling ones underlies—but frequently fails to inform—the development of health policy and health services in Britain, even though it is well known. Many factors contribute to "20th century epidemics", and their causes are poorly understood. Despite the heroics involved in heart transplants, coronary-bypass grafting, body scanning and the like, the diseases have remained resistant to cure. Their over-representation among disadvantaged people has so far stimulated health promotion programmes targeted at "problem" behaviours, such as smoking and excessive drinking, rather than fostering efforts to reduce inequalities.

Ministers' current concern about the value-for-money given by medical technologies owes something to a general awareness that health services may have only limited impact on length or quality of life. But the continuing climate of financial constraint has probably been a more important stimulus to their thinking. However uncomfortable it may be to recognise that an elixir for a long life in good health is not to be found in a test-tube, it does seem clear that major improvements in health will depend more on social changes and personal behaviour than medical advances. In the meantime, social policy should focus on developing new patterns of help to enable people with disabilities of all ages to retain as much independence as possible. This will inevitably involve a close mesh of health care and practical support—something that emerging government policy seems likely to discourage as "social care" becomes increasingly divorced from health services.

Attempts to engineer a shift of resources from acute to long-term care sectors within the health service have been taking place for well over a decade, with very little success. This policy has become a kind of Holy Grail—always sought after, but never achieved. One reason why it probably never will be is a belief in the power of those in white coats, along with their scalpels and microscopes, to solve all the ills flesh is heir to.

Medical science and its precursors have successfully pedalled more or less effective "magic bullets" for over 2,000 years. Successive societies have adopted many of them uncritically, from leaches to lasers. Becoming more discerning in assessment of medical priorities is an important precondition for more rational allocation of resources for health. But if being more rational involves uncomfortable facts about human vulnerability, ageing and death, then the magic promises of treatment-oriented medicine will continue to win the day.

Virginia Beardshaw is a health policy analyst with the King's Fund Institute, London.

Poverty knocks

Peter Townsend on the links between want and sickness

The government's social policies are in a mess, partly because they can be reconciled neither with statistical probity nor scientific evidence. Ministers are expected to display total conviction in the infallibility of Thatcherite ideology. This governs the interpretation of every event and the construction of every strategy. Facts are unnecessary to those who know what has to be done. And if facts happen to conflict with beliefs they can be managed. Health provides a perfect illustration of this approach.

To reduce ill-health and premature mortality would seem to be an elementary objective of policy. But for ten years this has not figured in the government's thinking. Before the summer recess, health minister David Mellor poured scorn on the large body of research demonstrating unemployment as a cause of ill-health.

At the same time the Department of Health continued to dodge the logic of the known connection between deprivation and death. It rejected the House of Commons social services committee's recommendation to reduce infant mortality by earmarking funds for areas of social deprivation, and for health authorities whose maternity services were not up to scratch.

The idea of material deprivation has become unacceptable to the department throughout the past decade. Back in 1980 Sir Douglas Black's working group had drawn unequivocal conclusions about the direction of the evidence. They found that deprivation played the biggest role in explaining the very unfavourable health record of the poorest quarter of the population. Biological, cultural and personal factors played only a contributory role. And inequalities between occupational classes were growing.

The findings were reinforced by the 1987 Whitehead report for the Health Education Council, the report of the BMA's Board of Science and Education in the same year, and the very detailed report this year by Edinburgh University's research unit in health and behavioural change. Ministers have remained obdurately indifferent.

Some of the gaps in the Black report's thesis are being filled. Inadequate incomes in old age and among young families with new babies have been shown to underlie the risk of getting hypothermia. Mental stress, depression and suicide, and diseases like stomach ulcers, have been traced in part to the effects of unemployment.

The health of the professional, administrative and managerial classes continues to improve. Many diseases that apply more to the rich than to the poor have virtually disappeared. The exceptions are cancer of the skin and, for women only, cancer of the brain, of the breast and of the bone marrow. But the health of the poorest quarter of the population has improved very little. Rates of death in middle life are nearly as bad as they were 30 or 40 years ago.

John Fox, Peter Goldblatt and their colleagues at City University have followed census samples of the male population from 1971 to show that inequalities of health continue into old age. Even more important, their latest work confirms that the widening inequality observed between occupational classes in the past three decades are not produced by unreliable measurement. Nor are the trends due to downward social mobility prompted by ill-health itself.

Michael Marmot's analysis of a large set of information from the civil service shows there are huge differences in age of death by job grade, and therefore by income, even when lifestyle variations in smoking, drinking and physical exercise are allowed for. And Richard Wilkinson's work at Sussex University on occupations has implications for scientific understanding and policy. It shows that movements in earnings correlate with changes in the mortality rates of those occupations. This is a decisive link between the "spread" of incomes in a society and indicators of population health.

Work on the causal chain between material

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deprivation and early death or disability is also moving fast. One success of the Edinburgh research group is in demonstrating how bad housing, independently of other aspects of deprivation, affects health. Some forms of respiratory disease have been traced to spores from fungi in damp and dilapidated housing. Mould spores produce respiratory problems such as asthma, rhinitis and alveolitis. Certain viruses appear to thrive in damp conditions.

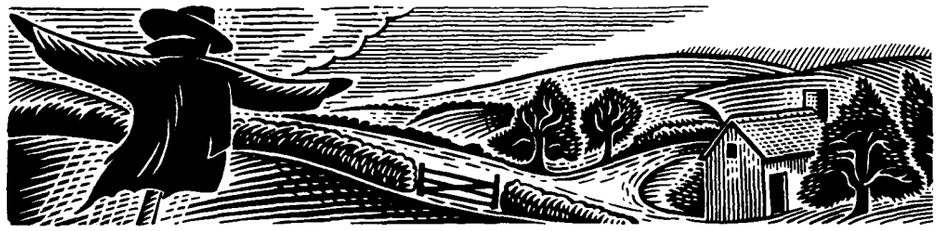
Environmental pollution is a logical extension of the housing effect. There is growing concern about the role of pollutants, especially air-borne metal particles, in areas of the inner city and communities bordering industrial plants. But the links with health are not easy to establish. Mortality in Middlesbrough, for example, was found to be a lot higher than in Sunderland, and this could not be accounted for by known indicators of deprivation. Some thought this might be a temporary blip in the statistics, which covered only three years.

Peter Phillimore has now completed an important follow-up study confirming the consistency of the difference right through the years 1976 to 1985. This may be explained by the additional pollution on the south bank of the Tees, but this cause will not be easy to pin down. The government's and the local authorities' statistical units are too poorly organised to study links between different forms of area pollution and area mortality.

Peter Townsend is professor of social administration at Bristol University.
Society Today next week will be on health statistics.

Sunil Gupta/Network

FRINGE BENEFITS



Colin Ward remembers the Peckham Health Centre

Kenneth Clarke expostulated to a radio interviewer the other day: "We've never run the health service as some kind of workers' cooperative."

More's the pity, I would say. But the real tragedy is that we have never run a health service, only an illness service. By stressing the word *health*, I don't mean preventive medicine, I mean the pursuit of the conditions for personal, family and social well-being. There was one unforgettable experiment in this direction, and it died with the foundation of the NHS. This was the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham.

For people like me, curious about the preconditions for resourcefulness and independence, it was a verification of our deepest convictions. The founders were a husband-and-wife pair of doctors, Innes Pearse and George Scott Williamson. In 1938, they wrote about their Family Health Club: "It seems that 'a sort of anarchy' is the first condition in any experiment in human applied biology. This condition is also that to which our members most readily respond..."

It began much earlier, in 1926, when after welfare work in south London they concluded that most urban dwellers were so "de-vitalised" that babies were born deficient in health. To study the characteristics of health they devised the idea of a family club, to be joined on two conditions, first, that the whole family must join; and second, that families must agree to a periodic medical examination.

They started in a small house run as a club until 1929. The next step was to raise the money from charitable trusts to move to a purpose-built family club big enough to be self-supporting from subscriptions. By 1935 they had raised the cash and built the Pioneer Health Centre, designed by Sir Owen Williams. It was glass-walled inside and out, as the Peckham biologists needed to observe what members actually did. The centre of the building was a swimming pool, and there was a theatre, a gymnasium and a children's nursery on the ground floor, with dance halls, a cafeteria, a library and medical rooms.

It ran from 1935 to 1939, and after the war from 1946 to 1950. It ended in 1951 after all efforts to get it adopted by local authorities or the NHS had failed. Since "health centres" had become part of official doctrine after the National Health Service Act of 1946, the directors approached the Ministry of Health to incorporate it into official provision.

They failed for five reasons: first, it was concerned exclusively with the study and cultivation of health, not with the treatment of disease; second, it was based exclusively on the integrated family, not on the individual; third, it was based exclusively on a locality, it had no "open door"; fourth, its basis was contributory (2s 6d—12.5p—a family a week), not free; and fifth, it was based on autonomous administration, and so didn't conform to the NHS structure.

The centre died but the idea did not. Pioneer Health Centre Ltd still exists and in the past ten years has ensured the republication by the Scottish Academic Press of all the old Peckham reports. The same publishers have just brought out, at £7.95, a new study called *Being Me and Also Us: Lessons from the Peckham experiment.* The author is Alison Stallibrass, a Peckham veteran and author of that modern classic of child development, *The Self-Respecting Child.*

Her book is fascinating from several points of view. First, she has sought out people who were members as children or young parents and gathered their recollections of what the place meant in their lives. It is an enormously impressive testimony. Second, she shows how ahead of their time the Peckham pioneers were.

They were founder members of the Soil Association and took on a farm to ensure that members could buy nutritious bread, milk and vegetables and to provide holidays in the sun. Fifty years later, old Peckham hands remember that delicious bread. Third, she demonstrates how the preoccupation with the family was not a limiting, but an enlarging, factor. Members gradually accepted all the children as part of the family, while children and adolescents related to all the adults.

Finally, she asks and ventures answers to the question: could we replicate the experiences of Peckham today? The original building cost about a fifth of the typical super-cinema of the period, though it was expensive to run. A modern equivalent would be far more useful in any community than the standard local "leisure centre" which caters for a narrow band of the population and has no links with the ideology of self-catering, health-counselling, personal and social autonomy.

I only went there once, in 1949. I listened to Scott Williamson wittily addressing a meeting of the London Anarchist Group, and I visited Innes Pearse when she retired to Argos Hill windmill in Sussex. I never realised until I read this book that they must be considered as *the* truly creative figures in 20th century social medicine.

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Brenda Prince/Format

Older people "should learn to be craftspeople and artists"—This elderly woman tries her hand at a video camera

Ten million third agers

A FRESH MAP OF LIFE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE THIRD AGE
Peter Laslett
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £16.95

Michael Young

Peter Laslett is himself the best advertisement for the Third Age which he has done so much to champion. Since his retirement from his university post at Cambridge he has been tireless—indeed, at 74 he seems to be getting more eloquent and energetic rather than less—in writing about the new old age which is not old at all, in starting up new research on ageing in China in collaboration with the University of Peking and in forwarding the cause of the University of the Third Age in Britain. He was one of its founders; U3A now has over 100 branches.

His thesis is straightforward enough: that up until the "middle of the 20th century and all over the globe the greater part of human life potential has been wasted, by people dying before their allotted time was up"; and that the vast army of people over retirement age—already ten million in Britain and growing—represents an almost totally new age of man and, more particularly, woman. Though longevity has increased all round, women are in the large majority because wives are living so much longer than their husbands.

What is happening can be summarised by the survival curve produced in the United States by James Fries and his associates (see right). It shows the percentage of a group of babies born in a particular year still alive at successive birthdays. The point of it is that the percentage dying stays almost horizontal until well into old age and then falls almost vertically as most of them die off within a brief period after 85 or so. Fries does not say this has occurred yet but that the human survival curve is tending towards rectangularity as increasing life expectancy converges on the fixed life span. The life span is the biological limit to the length of life, life expectancy is the number of years expected from birth.

The consequence of this longer expectation of life is that older people should at last be able to put many hoary stereotypes to rest. They are no longer unproductive, shuffling, slow, bent-over, cloth-capped, no longer so much holding people up in the queue at the check-out or being jeered at by gangs in the street, but upright, bright-eyed people at the crown of life. They are no longer tied down by the need to prepare for ordinary paid work, as children and teenagers are, nor by having to slog away at it, day in, day out, year in, year out, throughout the servitude of their working lives. They are in an age of liberation. They can choose to do what will be most fulfilling.

According to the new terminology which the ten million are being so persuasively urged to adopt, they now need to consider themselves as in the Third Age. To do this they have to distinguish themselves from the immature and dependent of the First Age, the mature earners of the Second Age and those in the stage of "final dependence, decrepitude and death", the Fourth Age.

As Third Agers achieve this new awareness of themselves they are bound to make ever more of a mark on the economy, on the media, on culture and on politics. Laslett has no doubt that this will happen and nor have I since the Open College of the Arts has from its Yorkshire HQ in Barnsley succeeded in adding so many thousands of older students to the thousands of younger ones who want to engage in serious study of the visual arts, creative writing, garden design. Laslett points out that, unless Third Agers who have the time for it take up the crafts with dedication, we shall never again have the kind of wonderful objects and buildings which we are so fortunate to have inherited from a past when people were so much richer in time to attend to detail. Only older people could now build a cathedral like Durham or Wells.

He does not suggest they should. But he does suggest they should learn to be craftspeople and artists and musicians of the most skilled and sensitive kind. He also wants Third Agers to protect our monuments, keep our libraries and museums open and cared for full-time, investigate themselves by means of research and develop a new educational system for themselves through institutions like the University of the Third Age. The humanities have been increasingly neglected by governments which think of little except the Second Age and the preparation for it. The humanities could be revived and nourished by the Third Age.

In his general enthusiasms I am wholly with Laslett. But I fear that the future will not be as

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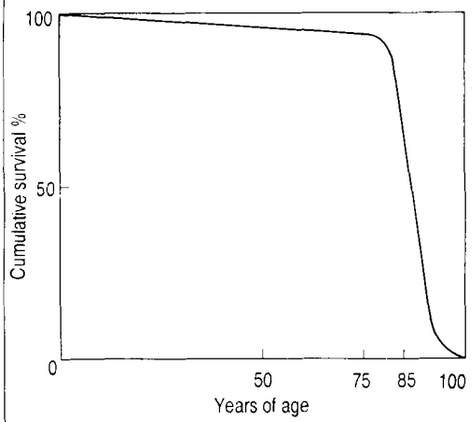
he wants if he keeps to the present prescription. One thing wrong is the very enumeration of the four ages. The Third Age is distinguished from a Fourth when it does not need to be, indeed when a Fourth does not need to be postulated at all. The Third Age as a term was only invented because all those others used for the "old" have become tarnished, as they are always liable to be as long as most of us do not want to get older. But in demarcating a Fourth Age as well, in order to allow the younger old by comparison not to feel old at all, the labelling problem (as Professor Margot Jefferys has powerfully argued) is wished on to even more vulnerable people. The Third Age can survive as a term perfectly well by comparison with the Second. All older people would then be in the one group, and why not?

A more serious point is that Laslett's description of the role of people in the Third Age is too thin, too much focused on what they can do to help themselves and what they can do to preserve our cultural heritage. It is rather assumed that they are retired from paid work, but need they be? There is surely no reason why they should not do such work even if it is work they choose rather than the work they were required



to do earlier in their lives. The more they do, and so the more they help to support themselves, the less likely is there to be a backlash against them on the part of the people in the middle of the age-spectrum whose daily toil has to support the old (in such increasing numbers) as well as the young.

A backlash is far more likely if older people are encouraged to think of themselves as a quite separate grouping. It is fine to have a Third Age but only if it is not concentrated exclusively on a good life for its members alone, or rather if it is recognised that a good life for the old needs to contribute to a good life for others a well. They can only assert rights if they recognise duties. The new Link Age organisation is even newer than the University of the Third Age. But its message—people of the grand parent generation have a special responsibility for the children of the alternate generation, that is for the children of grandchildren age—is just as important.

The increasing fragility of marriage is putting more and more children at risk. One of the main roles of grandparents has always been, all over the world, to support parents and if need be to act as substitutes for them. Let it happen again and not just between people who are related by ties of blood. The Third Age could come to the rescue of the First and this could be its most valuable function. But all the same it will not happen, nor any more positive view be taken of old age, unless the lessons of this stimulating book, which is demography, history and polemic all in one, are taken fully to heart and Laslett's vision put into practice.

Branagh's rise and decline

BEGINNING
Kenneth Branagh
Chatto & Windus £12.99

Sean French

I saw Kenneth Branagh in Julian Mitchell's *Another Country*, which was his first professional stage role after leaving RADA. It was immediately obvious that he was among the most exciting actors in the country. For a couple of years after that, every role he played was a revelation, whether on screen or stage, culminating in a brilliantly gritty Henry V for the Royal Shakespeare Company.

What Branagh has achieved since then is remarkable. He has set up his own theatre company, Renaissance, entirely without public funding, and at the age of 28 directed his first film, *Henry V*. Not only did he star in the film but the dustjacket of his autobiography tells us that Chatto is about to publish his screenplay. I hope that Shakespeare at least receives a co-authorship credit.

It's a brilliant achievement, but these memoirs don't dispel the impression that it's largely an administrative, entrepreneurial achievement. At 22 Branagh seemed like an actor who would reshape our view of the great roles. At 28 he has become the most prominent actor in British public life, a crony of the Royal Family and he's busier than ever. But his bland portrayal of Jimmy Porter in the recent revival of *Look Back in Anger* showed that something had been lost on the way up.

There have been some fascinating autobiographical books by actors published in the eighties. Simon Callow and Antony Sher have written brilliantly on the mechanics of acting. Olivier's strange memoirs were a meditation on guilt and human failure.

By contrast, *Beginning* is a shallow public work. Branagh admits that he wrote it to pay for an office for the Renaissance and indeed the book reads as if that were the predominant literary impulse.

In surveying his astonishing rise from a working-class Belfast background, Branagh talks of how a "particular talent. . . was combined with a measure of ambition and some quite extraordinary professional good fortune". That is absurd. In fact his success has been fuelled by dazzling ability linked with a drive and self-belief that would have taken him to the top of any profession he had attempted.

This book, however, gives no hint of the source of these impulses, and almost no sense of the nitty gritty of being an actor (as opposed to being an impresario). The foul rag and bone shop of the heart seems to have been hastily tidied up and repainted in expectation of a visit from Prince Charles.

In the final breathless third of the book, Branagh's acting disappears from view almost entirely as his actual performances become a virtual obstacle to the endless meetings involved in raising money for his company's projects. Branagh has twice played Hamlet, the role that stands at the summit of western theatre, and each time, by his own account, the distractions of his career were such that he couldn't even give the role his full attention.

W H Auden left England because he saw the establishment as a family that would absorb and constrain him. Kenneth Branagh has progressed from being the best to being Prince Charles's favourite. I suspect that the Prince of Wales's taste in acting is much like his taste in architecture—the amiable and blandly traditional is preferred to the disturbingly modernistic.

The Kenneth Branagh who wrote this matey book is cruising towards his knighthood. He urgently needs to do something dangerous, something that his royal friend will see as a theatrical carbuncle.

An anatomist's sadness

RESTORATION
Rose Tremain
Hamish Hamilton £12.95

Carole Angier

Rose Tremain was one of the Best of Young British Novelists in 1983 (remember that wheeze?), along with such other new young luminaries as Martin Amis, Ian McEwan and Salman Rushdie. That was after her first three novels, which already showed a daring imagination. Now here is her fifth novel, and she's leapt even higher.

Restoration is set in the 17th century and told by a man—decisions that could hardly have been more daring for a 20th century woman. Yet Rose Tremain is utterly convincing and moving (more than I've ever found her) as Robert Merivel. She's made the 1660s, too, alive and real: partly because she's done her research so well, and partly because (which is surely part of her point) they are like the 1980s, a precarious scramble for wealth and power, surrounded by natural disasters like portents.

Robert Merivel himself is her best creation. He's perhaps more 20th century than 17th, a sceptic and a scientist. But he's quite marvel-

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lous, a literary and psychological triumph. He thinks he's a mess, short and ugly and covered in food stains. But his melancholy and his broken-looking nose sound irresistible, and women clearly find him so. He says he's cowardly, vulgar and absurd, and he believes it; but we don't, not entirely. This is very hard to do, but very well done; and it prepares us for the main story, which is also both of these: the story of a great change.

The source of everything in England, Merivel tells us, is the King, and so is the source of everything in the novel. His is the original exile and Restoration, which Merivel now repeats. The way it happens is extravagantly comic and tragic. The King has a beautiful young mistress whom he wishes to keep safe in a marriage of convenience (*his* convenience, of course). So he devises a conspiratorial plot, which is Rose Tremain's narrative one. He will marry Celia to someone she will not love, because he is a Fool, and who will not love her, because he is "too enamoured of women in general to make the mistake of loving one". One of the novel's central images is Merivel's discovery that the heart, as an organ, is utterly without feeling. That is what the King believes about Merivel's: wrongly, and so precipitates his tragedy.

Before he was a Fool he was a physician, and the King is helped in his plot by Merivel's "anatomist's sadness", which pervades the book. When he hears a man play beautiful music or looks at a beautiful woman he begins to see skeletons and maggots, "the cavity, the cavern, the cave, the ghastly deep". So he allows the King to put him to sleep, turning from mortality to mindless pleasure. But the failure of the King's plan wakes him up, and sets him on the path to Restoration: via, necessarily, his own exile and furnace of affliction.

This furnace of affliction is a Bedlam run by his Quaker friend, the symbolically named Pearce, who will have nothing to do with surfaces, pleasures or possessions. Here Merivel (and we, for 100 pages) must face suffering with a vengeance, first the mad people's, then his own. He is chastened and refined, but cannot be a Quaker. When Pearce dies he is drawn back to plague and fire-riven London, where he finds a use for himself at last as the physician he'd trained to be. In the last pages of the novel he completes his Restoration, with the love of his daughter and the regained kindness of the King.

The book is a *tour de force*. It's memorably written from the start ("Women were cheaper than claret, so I drank women"), but with the great deepening of Merivel comes a deepening of its language. It's full of extraordinary imagery, especially of the body, which is Merivel's business: a besieged, ugly vessel spewing blood and vomit and pus, its interior pierced by Merivel's dissections, post mortems and (almost unbearable) Caesarean section. It dissects the deepest questions: loneliness and change, poverty and madness, art and science; and perhaps especially the furies of unrequited love—on both sides, giving and receiving.

And it ends both hopefully and darkly. For it suggests that, though women love men, men only desire women; and that sexual love is possessiveness, deception or obsession, in any case dangerous. Merivel did not love any of his women, he discovers, but only Pearce and the King. His Restoration is to loving his vocation and his child but not, it seems, to the possibility of loving a woman.

A black book, then, in many ways, but a hugely rich one, absolutely Rose Tremain's best so far. (The others are all being reissued by Hamish Hamilton, so do compare.) Last year she was one of the judges for the Booker: this year she's quite rightly a contender herself.

The way it was

WARTIME: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR
Paul Fussell
Oxford University Press £15

Philip Oakes

It is good to read this book after the autumn's outbreak of world war two spectaculars. It is the work of a notably honest man. Fussell does not subscribe to the nostalgia machine, nor is he a political theorist. Looking back through the gunsmoke of five decades he examines the impact of war on soldiers and civilians, what they thought and how they felt, what lies they were told, which legends they believed, how they lived and how they died.

"The real war will never get into the books," said Walt Whitman after the armies of north and south had lain down their arms. Fussell acknowledges the same limitations. But his truth-telling is both epic and intimate, ground level and grand. Anyone who lived through the times he describes will recognise the real thing. It is the best account we are likely to get.

Fussell tells a story of painful disillusionment and his chronology follows that of the war itself, beginning with the reassurances of the generals in October 1939 that useful lessons had been learned from the last show and that there would be no wholesale slaughter of troops. But how else could victory be achieved? Even Hitler got it righter than most. "The loser of this war will be the side that makes the greatest blunders," he prophesied. The cock-ups multiplied and the prophecy was fulfilled.

From first to last, the Allies committed their full share. Our tanks were too small. Our faith in precision bombing was misconceived. Even with the Norden bombsight which was claimed to hit a 25-foot circle from 20,000 feet, planes had to fly well within anti-aircraft range to get anywhere near the target. By the war's end fragments of 22,000 Allied bombers littered the fields of Europe and Asia, along with the remains of 110,000 airmen. Only the German record was worse. In the first air-raids on London when 500 tons of bombs were dropped, only half fell on the land at all and only 30 tons hit the capital.

The busiest of war industries, as Fussell demonstrates, was hype, with generals going to battle flanked by PR men, Churchill replacing Lord Woolton's Communal Feeding Centres ("an odious expression, suggestive of communism and the workhouse") with British Restaurants and the public being sold, and gratefully buying, the image of a pseudo war "not too distant from the familiar world of magazine advertising and improving popular fiction". The reality, Fussell suggests, was too awful to bear.

He honours courage and endurance, wherever he finds it, but his real heroes are writers and broadcasters who resisted the rising tide of cant and stuck by their editorial guns, however outmoded. On D-Day itself, he notes approvingly, the BBC broadcast a talk by E M Forster on Harold Laski's *Faith, Reason and Civilisation* and throughout hostilities Cyril Connolly sustained *Horizon*, in which he regarded the almost total lack of patriotic poetry as a sign of national health. Fussell quotes Peter Conrad: "This was a war to which literature conscientiously objected." Keeping the faith meant keeping silent.

Fussell's brief does not include weighing a world in which fascism, whatever its source, was allowed to prosper. He cannot, unless I gravely misread him, conceive of a necessary war. But his portrait of a conflict which was unwanted, total and interminable is superb. I especially admired his impressions of blacked-out London in which Hyde Park after dark became "a vast battlefield of sex" and where rescuers attending the bombed-out Café de Paris found looters stripping baubles from the dead. This may not be the way we would like to remember it. It is undoubtedly the way it was.

Whose vain conceit?

A VAIN CONCEIT: BRITISH FICTION IN THE 1980s
D J Taylor
Bloomsbury £4.99

Anthony Quinn

The seed of this polemic on English fiction in the 1980s can be traced to an "In My View" column D J Taylor wrote for the *Sunday Times* a few months ago, in which he fulminated against the stale parochialism of "old guard" novelists like Kingsley Amis, John Fowles and Margaret Drabble. Over a 1,000-word stretch this sort of broadside was fine, making some brisk, contentious points and leaving the reader pleasantly piqued. Trying to spin out the trick to book-length, however, presents problems which Taylor is quite ill-equipped to deal with.

For one thing, despite the white heat of indignation in which his book was plainly conceived, he lacks the courage of his convictions. This is evident from the very first pages, in which the decline of the English novel during the 1970s is mapped against a backdrop of economic gloom but, covering his flank in a way that will become familiar throughout the book, Taylor

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caps the passage with—"Equating broad political trends with the progress of a highly stylised art form is a facile business at the best of times". A door seems to open, we glimpse a point, but the subsequent train of afterthoughts, qualifications and counter-theses quickly shuts it again.

It's a weakness that leads into a mire of contradiction. "Categorisation makes fools of us all", and none more so than Taylor, as he goes on to categorise as "literary" any novel with "pretensions to respectability". This "literary novel" has become a "stylised abstraction" in the hands of certain English writers—Amis *père*, Drabble, John Wain, Frederic Raphael—whose most recent efforts are, "without exception, bad books". Fair enough, you think, yet the very next paragraph begins, "It is facile to accuse a novelist of 'failing'." Erm...

Taylor's ideal is the teeming, confident panoramas of the 19th-century novel—Thackeray and Trollope his favoured exemplars—but while one can agree that modern English fiction looks a bit weedy at the moment, Taylor fails to take his comparison of old and new beyond the realm of personal preference. The social oppositions delineated in *Barchester Towers* are, we learn, "relatively subtle", while those in David Lodge's *Nice Work* are "unusually facile". This is wobbly assertion, not cogent argument. Taylor is on safer ground when he later discusses "modern American style", comparing the clipped authenticity of a passage by American novelist John Edgar Wiseman with A N Wilson's awkward approximation of the demotic tongue (it could easily be A N Other).

Where Taylor's book goes way off the beam, however, is in his diatribe against book reviewers or, as he identifies it, "the middle-brow conspiracy". One could dismiss this from anybody else as the soured gripes of the excluded; yet Taylor is second only to Anthony Burgess in terms of ubiquity on the review pages. If such a "conspiracy" exists, then Taylor is undoubtedly part of it.

Having described the "typical literary novel" as "infinitely useless" he goes on to contend that this wouldn't matter particularly were it not for "a deferential reviewing establishment with an engrained reluctance to condemn inferior work". Please, how can book-reviewing, at its best a parasitic art-form, affect the substance of novel-writing, inferior or otherwise? In fact, the chapter adds up to no more than an airing of some testy prejudices: he snipes at, among others, literary editors, women reviewers, experimental writers, old novelists and people who wear horn-rimmed spectacles.

In common with many young (male) reviewers, Taylor borrows stylistic tricks and tics from Martin Amis—in particular his book of essays, *The Moronic Inferno*—but offers glib rhetoric rather than Amisian wit and thrust. His attempts at satire, including an imaginary conversation between Henry James, Firbank, Amis senior, Trollope and "Professor X", are lame to the point of embarrassment. *A Vain Conceit* has been heralded as a "provocative antidote" to the Booker bingo, but it is Taylor's own vain conceit to set up these rheumatic Aunt Sallys, uselessly demolish them, and then fancy himself a maverick.

Crossman's Sancho Panza

DICK CROSSMAN: A PORTRAIT
Tam Dalyell
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £14.95

John Campbell

Tam Dalyell was for seven years, in opposition and in office, Dick Crossman's PPS—as he calls himself, Don Quixote's Sancho Panza. He lodged with Crossman during the week in Vincent Square, cooked his breakfast, took the first impact of his daily reactions to colleagues and events (before he recorded them for posterity at the weekend) and generally had the job of clearing up the trail of broken fences and trampled feelings which the great educator left behind him in his trumpeting progress through British politics. Nevertheless he remained devoted to him and continues to identify himself with Crossman in his own humbler mission to drag out the skeletons of the Establishment.

He is therefore in an unrivalled position to offer an intimate interpretation of Crossman; and his opening pages promise well. He was persuaded to write this book, he tells us, by reading what he considered unfair criticism of Crossman at a 1987 seminar by colleagues getting their own back for what he had said of them in his diaries. "Those of us who remain," Dalyell writes, "have obligations to the dead. I was annoyed by derogatory, denigratory and in my view unjustified comment, coming close to a genteel and sophisticated slur. I admit there is an element of tit-for-tat in the genesis of this book."

Then the first two or three chapters are excellent. "To begin to understand Dick Crossman," Dalyell was told at the outset of his association with him, "you have got to understand his bizarre relationship with his father." Dalyell, of course, never knew Mr Justice Crossman; but his judgment, from his own observation, that the grown-up cabinet minister was still in lifelong adolescent rebellion against his dry-as-dust, ultra-cautious father is shrewd and convincing; likewise his treatment of the powerful influence of Winchester and the unlucky circumstance that the Attlees happened to be suburban neighbours and close friends of Crossman's parents in the 1920s, with the result that Attlee became to Crossman another stuffy father-figure to be rebelled against and consequently took a forever jaundiced view of Crossman. ("I asked Attlee about Dick Crossman's tennis. 'Erratic—like his politics,' came the laconic reply.")

This is good and useful stuff. But it is so much better-written than the rest of the book that one suspects it was written earlier, with more leisure and possibly for another purpose. As a short free-standing biographical essay it would be admirable; but the subsequent chapters get progressively more thin, perfunctory and repetitious as Dalyell settles for stringing together an inconsequential jumble of anecdotes and reflections, and increasingly obtrudes himself into the picture. (He mentions at least four times that he dragged out proceedings on the Devolution Bill, 1978—four years after Crossman's death—to 47 parliamentary days). Whole paragraphs of the later chapters are simply lifted from the *Diaries*, with no clear point except to pad out the book. There is disappointingly little of the promised tit-for-tat in reply to Crossman's detractors—indeed there is virtually none at all. In the end, Tam Dalyell's astonishingly lame conclusion is that "Crossman had style". Is that all?

With his three marriages, his influential book on Plato, his wartime work in propaganda, his passionate commitment to Israel, his involvement with the Bevanites and his journalism, Crossman offers a wonderful canvas to a biographer—quite apart from his successful hijacking of the historiography of the Wilson government which has ensured his immortality. Anthony Howard, the lucky biographer, will gain scattered insights from Dalyell, but no more. Really publishers should not commission books from busy politicians until they have the time to write them properly.

Art's no joke

THE TRICK OF IT
Michael Frayn
Viking £11.95

Zoë Heller

It is fitting that Michael Frayn's first novel for 16 years should explore the *difficulty* of writing fiction. Rather daunting for a reviewer, though, that it wittily deflates the business of literary criticism in the process.

When Frayn's hero, a lecturer in English, invites a female author whose book he teaches and reveres to give a talk to his students, he assumes she will be a disappointment in the flesh. But the visit ends up with the writer and the scholar in bed together. This—and the troubled relationship that ensues—is documented in a series of letters written by the lecturer to his friend in Australia.

Critically sophisticated and devilishly clever though he likes to think he is, our academic is confused. At last he is privy to his literary idol's personal life. In fact, he is part of it. Yet, to his dismay, he doesn't understand her books or her talent any better for knowing what colour her knickers are. And he's not sure whether to be crestfallen that she's only human (her knickers and her bra don't match) or resentful that she and her artistry (the eponymous "trick" of how she writes those damn books) retain such a mystique.

There are other problems: why, he asks, in his jokey, anguished letters, doesn't she write about *him*? He's hurt that their life together doesn't find its way into a novel—but feels invaded when she starts to write about his

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mother. "Her Omniscient Majesty doesn't know what went on inside my mother's head." And why, since he is several times more intelligent than her, can *he* not write a novel? As he sets out to prove that "any bloody fool can do it", one is reminded of Johnson's defence of critics: "You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables."

This critic tries his hand at a bit of amateur woodwork and finds that his table won't stand up; the project has to be abandoned halfway through. His failed fictional efforts corroborate what seems a rather conservative response on Frayn's part to the question of how Great Art is made. The creative process is, we are encouraged to conclude, essentially *mysterious*. We may enjoy its results but we can never properly grasp *how* the rare breed of artist-magicians do it. Such Kenneth Clark-style reverence seems to me a bit dubious. I'm jolly impressed by people who makes tables but I wouldn't say the knack of furniture-making was unfathomable.

Perhaps, however, the final joke of this thoughtful and often very funny book has a demystifying point to make after all. The critic gives up trying to understand or emulate the novelist's *je ne sais quoi*. He has tried to pin the artist down—and lost. But if he is forever barred from grasping the trick of it, what, we may want to ask, are his scribblings doing, in an elegant book jacket, priced £11.95?

Hu goes west

THE QUESTION OF HU
Jonathan D Spence
Faber £12.99

Piers Gray

"The idea for this book came to me on the night train from Pesaro to Florence," writes the author in his acknowledgments: whatever gets you through the night, as John Lennon says, but, to be honest, without its necessary transfiguration this was, at best, a limited moment of inspiration.

John Hu was the gatekeeper at one of Canton's Roman Catholic churches in the early 18th century. A fervid convert, he succumbed to an obsession about getting to Rome for a meeting with the Pope. Coincidentally, Father Jean-François Foucquet, a Jesuit missionary, was determined to get there with his large collection of Chinese texts. His mission was to show, from interpretations of classic works, that, in truth, they were proto-Christian meditations, thus proving "first, that the origins of the ancient Chinese religious texts, such as *The Book of Changes*, are divine, that they were handed to the Chinese by the true God; second, that in China's sacred books the word for the 'Way'—the *Dao*—represented the same true God that Christians worship; third, that the same divine significance could be read into the Chinese philosophical phrase the *Taiji*, used in so many texts to refer to an ultimate truth."

In order to help him collate and transcribe the key passages of his many texts, Foucquet needed an amanuensis. For a variety of reasons—practical and circumstantial—John Hu was deemed to be marginally suitable and so the obsessive pair set off to Europe. During the tedious sea journey, Hu began to demonstrate signs of instability, in the early stages of a somewhat comic nature: "Hu has learned no French yet, and his dining companions speak no Chinese. The Frenchmen murmur together that Hu seems to have little idea of how a European meal is served; he just takes whatever he wants as soon as it appears on the table. His companions try to explain the idea of portions to him. It is not an easy concept to convey" (is this so?) "and Hu continues to eat more that they feel he should. They occasionally use a measure of force to restrain him."

Naturally things went from bad to worse. After landfall in France, Hu's behaviour became decidedly eccentric, until he finally disappeared in Paris only to turn up again in Orleans a week later. How this was managed, no one knows. Meanwhile, Father Foucquet was plotting various dodges to get his precious books and himself to Rome where he would prove the sanity of his bizarre theories. But when the propitious moment presented itself, Hu violently refused to leave Paris, convinced that his companion and employer had murdered some person or persons unknown; the thrashing of limbs proved all too much for the monomaniacal Jesuit who promptly set off alone. Ultimately, the Chinese man was committed to the Asylum of the Brothers of Charity at Charenton, where he languished for three years until, eventually, an embarrassed church bureaucracy, aware of the unfortunate convert, ordered his release. It is at this point that the "question of Hu" was put: "Why," he asked the papel nuncio's translator, "have I been locked up?"

Part of the difficulty with the book lies in one's own reluctant answer to that question. On the evidence put forward by the author, Hu was, in plain speech, somewhat of a jerk. In his preface, Professor Spence says that he does not think Foucquet was right in his treatment of Hu, but equally, in confronting his story, the Jesuit nonetheless remains, in a way, "the victor" over moral disapprobation. And why not? For surely the Chinese man *chose* to go to Europe, and a liberating judgment would be one which acknowledged Hu's own "free" part in his unfortunate adventures—unless, of course, you wish to challenge Foucquet's right to be in China in the first place.

But the story ended happily enough. Hu returned to Canton and, having been paid off by the church, to his native village. The book's conclusion has him seated among compatriots in the evening sun as the children cry out: "Uncle Hu, tell us what it's like over there in the west." Hu pauses a moment, and closes his eyes. "Well," he says, "it's like this."

And it's also like this: here is an ironical final sentence which works against its own intention, revealing the evasions out of which the whole story was told (why is it difficult to explain "portions"?) for, above all, what we really want to know is exactly how Spence would begin to imagine Hu's perception of "reality" as he stumbled through 18th century France. But, again, perhaps that is to ask the wrong question of a professional historian, especially one as distinguished as Jonathan D Spence, since, in the end, the question of Hu entails the absolute necessity of "genuine" fiction.

Food for thought

TOWARDS ASMARA
Thomas Keneally
Hodder & Stoughton £12.95

Grace Ingoldby

Read the word "Tigre" and you'll probably pronounce it properly; this is a place we've heard of in the news. *Towards Asmara*, an object lesson in how ill-informed we really are, opens in the Ethiopian province of the same name; it begins with the familiar.

The rocksinger appeals to half the world on television: in the forefront children starving, in the background the remains of a food convoy destroyed on its benign mission by Eritrean rebels. The rocksinger has 45 seconds, "he knew there was time for him merely to state a scenario: a disaster and a cause, a crime and a culprit... he knew that you didn't muddy the primetime water by suggesting that the story might be complex, that there might be more than one evildoer."

This, then, is the Eritrean angle. A 25 year war, a highly organised, astounding, civilian life underground, factories, hospitals, schools, "in holes in the earth, in scrub shelters... training in a pocket of dust for the computer age". Massive battles on the scale of El Alamein, "which, for all the world heard and hears of them, might as well take place on the moon's dark side".

Keneally has been to Eritrea, his heart is engaged in every word he writes, he is an unobtrusive, natural teacher. He connects: Eritrean veterans in London represent "the rebel movement in Europe as once Benjamin Franklin and John Adams had represented the American revolutionaries". Through example he points up unbridgeable gulfs between cultures and circumstances. Heat comes off the printed page when he wants it to: disease, danger, discomfort, disillusion—"my rebels had let me down"—dislocation; the journalist sweats in the bunker on a clay shelf with his boots on without the glib therapy of the telephone—the sheer distance of Africa, that sense of being out of call or cry; the tedium of bombardment, the waiting, the homesick stranger's longing to belong, to perform the Eritrean greeting gesture, the shoulder nuzzling, that ends with the word *Cernai*, the highest superlative, "wheat".

It is Eritrea, rather than the characters he chooses to relay his experiences there, which steals the show. His cast, an Australian lawyer turned *Times* journalist who worked with aborigines, a legendary cameraman and his daugh-

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ter, an American aid worker, a titled Englishwoman crusading against the mutilation of women, are a humourless, hardly credible group. Their emotional luggage (exact though it may be of Europeans in Africa) is too predictable and stereotypical to suspend disbelief. It is Eritrea, not one character's downfall or another's enlightenment, which engages us.

Eritrea isolated: "No one, absolutely no one from Washington to Moscow, wants them to succeed... if you guys succeed you'll be an embarrassment to Africa. Who wants a set-up like yours? It upsets the world picture. Don't you know the west has to believe famine's an act of God?"

Eritrea and the questions it throws up: "Did Stalin try to feed the Ukrainians? Did he weep when he discovered that he and the generous westerners had failed between them to keep life in some ten or 15 million of his enemies?" The politics of food.

Lags and screws

THE SECRET COUNTRY
John Pilger
Jonathan Cape £13.95

Robert Carver

When I worked in the maximum security wing of Sydney's Long Bay Gaol, the warders joked: "What's the difference between a crim and a cop?" Answer: "Cops are the ones who haven't been caught—yet."

"We were lags and screws set down on the edge of the earth. There was no love for country"—Pilger quotes the poet Dorothy Hewitt. Bravely, honourably, he faces up to an unblinking examination of Australia's history and psyche. Few enough have dared: it is a grim picture. Shouted down as ratbags and commos, radicals, whistle-blowers do not flourish in God-zone. Hence the irony of Pilger, anti-imperialist, left-wing republican, now living in London.

This book is terribly painful. It makes one ashamed, sad and angry. Any doubts one had about having left are crushed beneath the evidence of racism, corruption, philistinism and brutality which the author, like a latter-day Cobbett, remorselessly expounds.

For Pilger, Australia is still spiritually and economically a colony, a penal colony at that, Australian attitudes still linked to "the Stain" of convictism. Missing here is an analysis of Mateship, that solidarity of the chain gang (stick to your own mob, don't dob in your mates), providing haven and stoical straitjacket, promoting conformity, stifling dissent.

Missing, too—unforgivably—is all mention of pack rape, wife bashing and the degradation of women in contemporary Australia. In Oz 13 times as many blacks die in police custody as in South Africa; there is a higher level of child poverty than in any other western nation except the United States, one in five in 1988; Hawke's Labour government invests in Pinochet's Chile, bends the law so that Murdoch—now an American—can own yet more newspapers. From the moral cowardice of the Menzies years to the croneyism of Hawke, the unrecorded massacres of aborigines to the blatant criminality of Queensland under Bjelke-Petersen, New South Wales under Robert Askin or "Nifty" Neville Wran, scandals that would unseat a government in London in a week raise barely a murmur. Australians expect politicians and cops to be corrupt. It is even reassuring; to be "up yourself", morally superior, is a great Australian crime.

Pilger's exposé of Prime Minister Hawke and his super rich media-controlling cronies, Murdoch, Bond, Packer and Co, is devastating. Each of them, in the graphic vernacular, "pissing in each other's pockets"; the sleaze drips off the pages.

Some vignettes are reminiscent of a sabre-toothed, unexpurgated Dickens: gallant Hawke, in his "100-drinks-a-day" phase, at a parliamentary party in Canberra, well oiled, saying to Lady Fairfax, wife of Sir Warwick, the Sydney press magnate at Hawke's side: "I bet this old bastard doesn't give your cunt much use", offering to remedy the situation himself forthwith. Kerr, bloated Governor-General who ousted Whitlam, full of vintage champagne, easing his bulk down beside the Queen on a sofa—and slipping his arm behind her waist... "A sick feeling of repugnance grows in me every time I near Australia," Menzies wrote in his diary; now you know why.

The catalogue of grotesques becomes preposterous, one begins to laugh; this is a banana monarchy, full of V S Naipaul's mimic men and mimic institutions. But the pain, the moral squalor is real.

Like many grown-up Australians of sensibility and integrity, Pilger left. He composes a hopeful coda, a multiracial dreamtime, Sweden in the South Pacific; this book is the surest corrective to such utopianism. What can you hope for from outcast Regency toughs, genial, brutal Bill Sykes's and sentimental, corrupt Nancy's, who spit at the gaoler when in liquor, then kiss the whip in sober remorse?

Thwarted love

VIOLET TO VITA: THE LETTERS OF VIOLET TREFUSIS TO VITA SACKVILLE-WEST
Mitchell A Leaska and John Phillips (editors)
Methuen £16.99

Diana Souhami

"What a dreadful thing is marriage. I think it is the wickedest thing in the universe," wrote Violet Trefusis to Vita Sackville-West, the woman to whom she said she "belonged, body and soul". Violet's marriage was indeed dreadful. "I loathe men and look upon them merely as animals," she wrote. In 1919 she married Denys Trefusis and made him agree that there should be no physical contact between them. Her mother, Alice Keppel, insisted on the marriage to cool the social scandal of Violet and Vita's love and to safeguard the prospects of her other daughter. Alice Keppel was a paragon of propriety and discretion in the conduct of her own love affair with Edward VII.

Violet and Denys started their honeymoon at the Ritz in Paris. Vita booked in at a nearby hotel, took Violet there and "treated her savagely, I made love to her, I had her, I didn't care, I only wanted to hurt Denys". The newlyweds went on to St Jean de Luz where matters did not improve. Denys took to smoking a lot of cigarettes and staring into the middle distance. Violet shut herself in her room, wrote to Vita, pined for letters from her and schemed as to how they might elope.

The letters collected in this book date from 1910-21. They are lodged at the Beinecke Library at Yale. Most of them were written between 1918 and 1920 when there was some chance Vita might leave her husband Harold Nicolson and her children and live with Violet. She chose to stay with Harold and the two women stopped writing in 1921. The book's editors see the collection as a companion volume to Nigel Nicolson's *Portrait of a Marriage*, which gives Vita's account of her love for Violet. Violet's letters, say her editors, "document her side of this ill-starred passion. That is the sole justification for this volume".

The letters are filled with anger, provocation and love. Violet wanted Vita to destroy them and it feels intrusive to read them 70 years later. They do not have the control or literary polish of those written with an eye to posterity. They are hasty, repetitive, private and unrestrained. They absolutely convey the obsession, muddle and pain that prompted them.

They chronicle Violet's plans to elope with Vita, her happiness when they were together, her jealousy of Vita's domestic life, the nightmare of her own marriage. Trefusis burned Vita's letters to Violet. Violet burned the translation of Pushkin he was working on. He threatened to divorce her, with full public scandal, citing Vita as co-respondent. Alice Keppel refused to allow a separation, vowed to withdraw all financial and social support and insisted that Violet stayed out of England. George Keppel, Violet's father, took to leaving the room when she walked in.

"Ever since I was a child I have loved you," wrote Violet. "Lesser loves have had greater rewards." She was in her teens when she began writing to Vita. Her early letters are filled with bravado and excess: "Let's live you and I—let's live as none ever lived before." As the social pressures of upper class England in the 1920s intruded, the bravado changed to pain, loneliness and waste. "My love for you terrifies me. I love nothing in the world but you."

It is a sad testimony to thwarted love and ill-served by the judgmental tone of Mitchell Leaska's editorial comment: "Violet knew every string on the harp of love and she plucked them all... Neither of them was conscious of the wide chasm that separates adoration from love." His publishers have punished him by misspelling his name on the jacket of the book.

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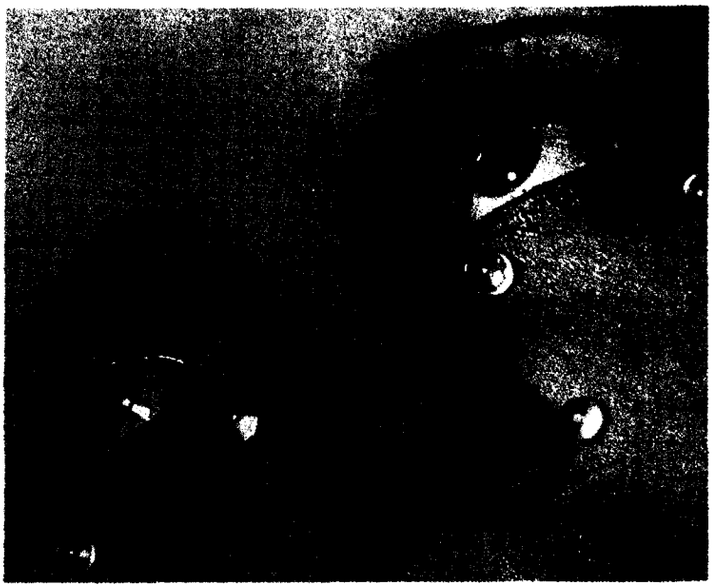

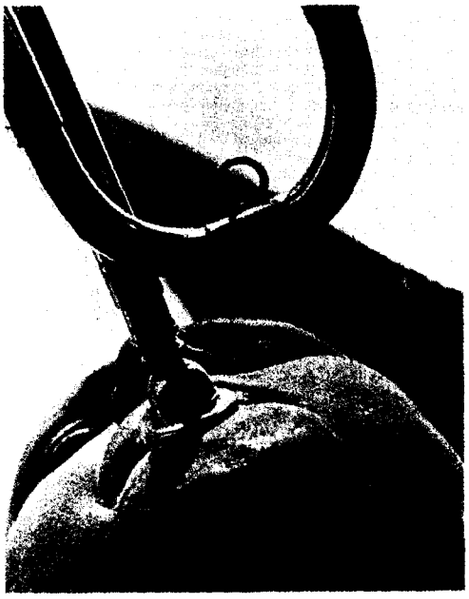

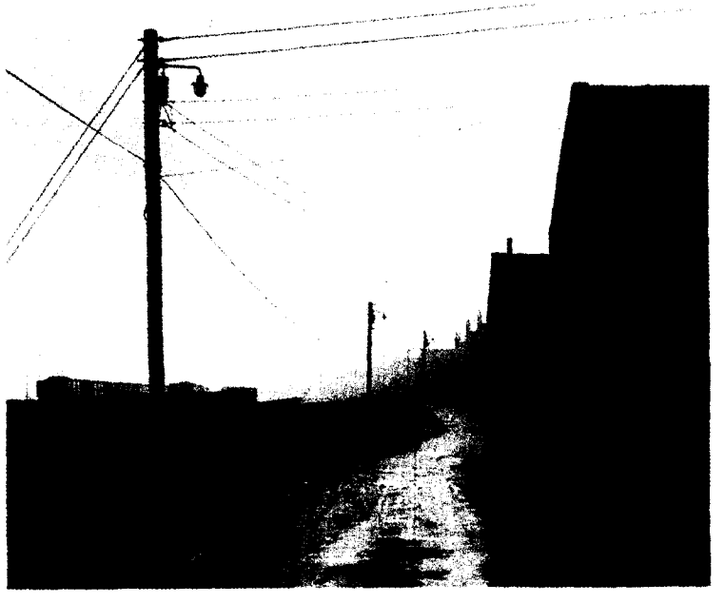

The current Royal Academy show finally allows photography through the portals of art. But at what cost? These are four of the artworks on show: (From left to right) Man Ray's "Glass Tears" c. 1930 (above); Diane Arbus's "Puerto Rican Woman with a Beauty Mask" 1967; Rodchenko's "Pioneer with a Horn" 1930 and Graham Smith's "Ensign, Co Durham" 1976

Mongrel on the streets

Photography has been flaunting its pedigree on its 150th birthday. Philip Dodd reports

Who gives a damn for the *art* of photography? For photography, yes, but for the *art*, no. Images of the dead on the streets of New York, crowds in the parks of London, bohemian bars in Paris, a Samurai warrior, the poor across several continents, soldiers and civilians, dead, dying, and surviving, and bodies touching in tenderness: all these and more are to be seen at the Royal Academy's **The Art of Photography 1839-1989**.

Such a range of subject matter should blow the top of your head off when seen in so many memorable images, but it doesn't. And it doesn't because the Royal Academy has rescued the works from the world in which, and for which, they were made. It has made them over into *art*.

Museums do this with everything they touch, of course. The Louvre, the first public art gallery, mixed religious objects with paintings taken in triumph by the French from the defeated. In staging such objects as art, the Louvre transformed their meaning and value.

That the photographs in the show have been ripped from their original context is, then, hardly unusual, and not necessarily a cause for lamenting—if the place in which they are staged does not deprive them of their resonance, or subdue them. Unfortunately, that's exactly what the cavernous galleries of the RA do with

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the works on show, some of which were never even destined for walls of any kind, but for books and newspapers.

But it's not merely the physical space in which the works are placed that mummifies them, but also the very conception of the show—although the setting does at least require that you look carefully at the works, and not merely pass from one to the next like royalty visiting the sick. The catalogue, which doubles as a book, is obsessed with photographic traditions, and great photographers.

Now no one wishes to deny that photographers work within photographic conventions, or that photographers learn from one another, but to give so much stress to these relationships is to imply that the history of photography is a long-distance relay race in which one great photographer hands on the baton to the next. Photography becomes effectively an incestuous matter in which Weegee begets Graham Smith who begets... At one level the explanation for this is clear—since art is primarily seen still in terms of geniuses, then if photography is an art, it must have its geniuses—from the British Fox Talbot through the American Paul Strand, the French Atget, and the American born in Hungary, Kértész, to the British Chris Killip.

But the status of art taketh away as well as giveth. There can be no doubt that this show will draw a large new public to photography, and it is marvellous to see some tremendous images in their original form. But the cost is high, for what the aura of *art* allows you to forget is the uses of photography, past and present.

Recover the photographs from their splendid isolation, and remember that they were made often under commission for particular audiences, and they become different things. And I'm now thinking in part of the kinds of photographs which are not conspicuous in the show—those done under the auspices of the state to document the endless series of deviants, from criminal through the insane to the poor.

There is an art to such photography, although an art contaminated by politics. You just have to look at the section called "Travel" to see what an opportunity has, on the whole, been consciously declined—to show how embroiled in colonial anthropology was photography, with its capacity to give "scientific" authority to European racial theories. Now this isn't to deny the art of such photographs, but to say that their aesthetic pleasures are inseparable from other kinds of pleasures which some of us want to have no part of.

But the worldliness of photography can be seen not only in such work done for the state and its agencies but also in more domestic kinds of pictures. For the London showing of *The Art of Photography*, a special section has been added which gathers together contemporary photographers such as Raymond Moore, Chris Killip, Graham Smith, and Martin Parr under the rubric "British Contemporaries". Smith and Killip particularly are seen as inheritors of the British tradition of documentary photography.

Now everything seems to happen twice in British photography, the first time as tragedy and the second time as farce. How else can you explain Graham Smith's work? Documentary photography in its heyday in the 1930s, together with documentary films and works such as Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier*, went out from the metropolis to discover the people who lived in the "jungles" of faraway places such as Bolton or Middlesbrough.

Out of that documentary work came a vision of the working class as male, manual workers, living in a Lowryscape called the north, and excelling in all things physical as their southern unmanly counterparts excelled in intellectual work.

The iconography was settled and still holds Graham Smith in its thrall. The figures in *Easington Co Durham* are still dwarfed by the world they live in, note the high wall and the departing goods train; they are still photographed at dawn or at dusk so that their individuality can be dissolved in shadow, and they can appear as nothing more than physical shapes. And above all they are photographed in black and white, for the northern working class and black-and-white photography go together like bread and dripping.

British documentary photography—once the vehicle of a concerned middle class wishing to mediate to the governing class the dignity and poverty of some of its subjects—has now dwindled in the work of Graham Smith to an art which panders to the cliché-ridden sentiment of its audience. What this show ought to have supplied was some sense of the world in which such work has been done. There should have been accompanying documentary films by John Grierson and the young Lindsay Anderson, relevant books and articles.

And even in the photographs in the show which are self-consciously arty, such as Man Ray's *Glass Tears*, which luxuriates in its artifice, playing with artistic representations of Mary Magdalene, some effort should have been made to explain the social uses of such playfulness. From the catalogue, you'd never know that modernism unpicked artistic conventions precisely in order to claim for itself space in which it could do more than record what was out "there". The possibilities of what might be, were equally important. And I longed to find startling juxtapositions, say a Rodchenko next to a Diane Arbus: to see the photographer who wanted to transform people into heroes next to the artist who cancelled the hope that things might be different, by focusing so unforgivingly on what is, at its most bleak.

In the present show is the material for a dozen better ones. All that is needed for any of them to become visible is the abandonment of the discredited model of *art*, which no one can want but the dealer, whose property is increased in value by shows such as this.

If the cost of becoming *art* is to become a precious isolated icon, as the photograph is at the RA, then photography ought to make its apologies and leave the temple of art as quickly and decorously as it can. Better to be a mongrel on the streets than a pampered pet indoors.

"The Art of Photography" is at the Royal Academy until 23 December. The book of the same title is published by Yale University Press at £45 (£22.50 paperback)

Cinema

Simulating nature

Animals don't share our emotions, argues Suzanne Moore

There are as many brands of nature these days as there are soap powder. You can have your nature Martin Amis style—raw, angry, terrifying, vengeful, full of shattered ozone layers and disasters waiting to happen. Or there is the sensible greeny model where nature is seen as exhausted, worn out, the poor old thing in need of a good rest to restore her innate balance and get her back on her feet. Or there is the sweet and cuddly version of nature, full of wide-eyed baby seals and caring voice-overs.

The Bear, this week's "epic film", fits the last category minus, thank God, the voice-over. Instead of a hyperventilating David Attenborough-style commentary we have real bear grunts, a marginal improvement and one that much impressed the French. *The Bear*, apparently a smash hit in France, outgrossed *Roger Rabbit* and is doing very well in every country it has reached.

It is, as you might have guessed, about bears, and the story line as summarised by the director is astonishingly simple: "A big solitary bear; an orphan bear cub; two hunters in the forest; the animals' point of view." And, for once, all the production notes that come with the film are a good read because, like so many of these kind of films, what happened during the shooting is often a damned sight more interesting than the film itself.

In the first instance, there was the problem of finding the bears—sorry, "animal actors"—and then getting them to perform for the camera. This apparently required dedicated trainers—sorry, "animal advisers"—prepared to commit themselves to such an enterprise. So what you end up with are bears that have been brought up in captivity having to be trained to *act* like wild bears in the wilderness.

Why anyone would spend years of his or her life wanting to do this is quite beyond me, but I guess I've never been a natural kind of woman. Jean-Jacques Annaud, the director, not only managed to put the whole thing together but, in the process, got mauled by one of his "stars". Klaus Kinski's squabbles with Herzog rather pale into insignificance when compared to Annaud's scarred backside.

The Bear is also unusual in that it has hardly any dialogue apart from dubbed animal noises. Annaud's previous film *Quest for Fire* shares this quality. Set in the palaeolithic era, it was done entirely in an ancient primitive language concocted by that ancient old primitive Anthony Burgess. Instead—and to his credit—Annaud makes the bears communicate with each other and with us through various looks and noises and manages to involve us in the story. The real

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More or less human? A poor little orphaned cub is like a real-life cuddly toy

nature in the film—fighting and killing scenes—is ironically done through animatronics à la Jim Henson of *The Muppets* fame.

Set in turn-of-the-century British Columbia (actually Austria and Switzerland) the scenery is fantastic and the range of emotions that Annaud elicits from his stars is often greater than that of their human counterparts. But the film lapsed too often into sentimental anthropomorphism to really work. The poor little orphaned cub is like a real-life cuddly toy and Annaud has sequences where it—sorry she—dreams about dear little frogs and things like that. Do bears dream in colour? It all became too much when the cub ate some hallucinogenic mushrooms and rolled around having a trip in the dewy grass. Bears are higher mammals, yes. They have certain emotions, yes. They re-enact scenes from Woodstock in their spare time? No.

Although Annaud does go beyond the Disney-esque, and the film comes stamped with approval from all sorts of wildlife authorities, *The Bear* falls prey to the myth that to touch an audience you have to show animals as more or less human. In order to care about bears we somehow have to believe that they are the same as us. Isn't it possible to care about an endangered species on the grounds that it is endangered rather than because it shares qualities we value? At one point the bear chooses not to kill an unarmed hunter, as though it has some sense of fair play.

It seems once again that we can't or won't accept the concept of difference. However much bears or monkeys remind us of ourselves, they are not human beings. That does not, however, give us the right to destroy them. As Julie Christie says in *The Animals Film*, how we treat animals tells us a lot about our relationship to each other.

By ascribing human qualities to *ursus arctos horribilis* (the grizzly bear), the film eventually tells us much more about our prejudices than it does about bears. This is especially apparent during the mating scene where ridiculous clichés are trotted out. The female bear seduces the male by supremely coquettish behaviour, and off they go into the bushes together where we hear orgasmic moaning, or at least the bear equivalent of it. And just in case you thought this film sounds a little too wholesome, you not only see a sex scene but a gay sex scene, as the bear plying the female is apparently "an incredibly effeminate male", according to the production notes.

What the hell is effeminate behaviour in a bear? At the end of the film a notice comes up which informs us that none of the animals has been mistreated and that some of the scenes have been simulated. You could say the same about some of the emotions.

Comedy

Caught in the act

Andrew Clifford on the Python legacy

Monty Python is 20 years old. The team's first show was broadcast on BBC2 on 5 October 1969. For a while the show languished on the BBC's second channel, seemingly watched only by those keen on a little extra *Call-My-Bluff* activity. Soon it had a cult following. Then the Golden Rose at Montreux clinched a (somewhat squeamish) acceptance by the media establishment. And, by the end of the seventies, Monty Python was the godfather of a comic "movement". To date, the Python family have created, Disneylike, a Python empire: films, books, records, adoring millions across the Atlantic, and the many other duchies of inventive entertainment the individual Pythons have established since leaving home.

Python's cultural significance stretches far beyond the "comic". True, alternative comedians cite one or other of the team as mentors ("John Cleese, you broke my heart!" cried Ben Elton about Cleese's SDP broadcast). But Python's importance is shown more in day-to-day conversations and jokey asides (of which one often says "That would make a good sketch") or in adverts, how they are made, and how they are watched, than just in present day comedy. Thanks to Monty Python, everyone in Britain is a satirist.

Python opened a whole new area for popular comedy: unlike situation comedies or music-hall, Monty Python rarely relied on personalities for their humour. They were not concerned with "character" as such, not even archetypically eccentric characters. Instead, the object of their humour was British culture all-of-a-piece, the English language "caught in the act" of acting at its own behest. While explicitly Python was politically uncommitted (one might be thankful for this bearing in mind their final message in *Life of Brian*—"You've got to think for yourselves. You're all individuals"—which brings to mind the mushy endings of the more sentimental American sit-coms), their humour was implicitly political; it gave a certain purchase on seemingly natural authoritative debate. The various media, television in particular, were subjects of their comedy, and at the same time so were the epitomising consumers of culture, be they art critics, Gumbys, or Palin and Jones's outlandish women-in-the-street.

For this reason, Monty Python was (and is) particularly popular with young people. It became the only comic equivalent of the seventies supergroups (John Cleese remarked that their live performances were more like pop concerts than theatrical shows), because in many ways they fulfilled the same lust for rebellion as pop music. Just as a teenager could suddenly become a discontented loner as he or she listened to David Bowie, an aspiring adolescent intellectual could gain the sense of authority of a cultural critic through Python. Like pop music, laughing at Python-type humour has become something which middle-class kids are now *expected* to grow into.

Monty Python chimes in with the typically teenage insight that the world of the media is there as much to be mocked as to be enjoyed and admired. But Python, in fact, offers a more sophisticated picture of things than this. Like seventies Glam Rock, it's infatuated with the targets it treats with such irony. Their attention to linguistic detail, for example, in sketches about TV chat or game shows, springs in part from a love for the range and articulacy of television. A lot of Monty Python is ultimately very perceptive impersonation, not of particular people but of formats and unwritten conventions. And impersonation is, of course, a form of flattery. It's true, also, that this double-edged sword is blunt on one side: the political spectrum in a Monty Python show ranges merely from the silly to the extremely silly.

In that sense, Monty Python were only making jokes. There were no punchlines, there was no cheese in the cheeseshop and the parrot was dead: Python deconstructs but does not construct. But then comedy cannot do everything. Monty Python possessed instead all the Oxbridge confidence and bravado of the brilliant lawyers, doctors and academics they could have become.

Twenty years on and the best of Monty Python still outshines its imitators in sheer comic inventiveness. No other comedians have inspired such a devoted, indeed virtually addicted following. But it should not be forgotten that this is by no means the only way in which they can claim to have achieved something completely different.

"Monty Python's Flying Circus—Just The Words" is published next month by Methuen. The BBC will be screening "The Monty Python Special" this autumn, and Virgin will be releasing a compilation album

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Mike Laye/Walkerprint

Terry Jones

"My politics have changed since the time of Python. I was fairly apolitical at the beginning of the series, perhaps vaguely left. John was always more political. He roped us in to do a film for the Labour Party. But I have become more politically aware (and moved further to the left) now mainly because of my reading of the 14th century. For me, Python would have a different line if it started up today under Thatcher.

Python itself wasn't so much political as a product of that feeling people had in the sixties that they could change the world, and make it a better place. We felt the world was changing and that we were part of that change. I was very aware at Oxford that we were part of the grammar school input. Today's comedians are much more politically aware.

The only real, tangible effect of Python that I really heard of was in the seventies when a friend teaching in a comprehensive said she had noticed a big difference in the way boys showed off. Instead of being macho they would be silly and their antics would be more verbal.

I don't think other comedians have been affected by us at all. Whenever I watch even something like *Not the Nine O'Clock News* I feel as though we were doing one thing and they are doing quite another.

One of the failings of Python was that it lacked character, we were trying to do anything that was funny, although that was also a strength.

We were definitely *not* a satire show, we wanted to be something new, we were deliberately getting away from satire and *lampoon* and getting back to satire in the broadest sense, based on human beings not individuals. We were livid when the BBC started billing us as satire in the *Radio Times*."

Sophie Baker/Walkerprint

Eric Idle

"Comedy's job is to be against things, not for them. Monty Python was firmly apolitical, though anti-authoritarian in flavour. In the years in which it flourished it was no longer possible to take any party seriously.

Thus, the Python attack is fixed on all the authority figures involved in growing up in this country: teachers, policemen, judges, mothers, minor royalties, politicians, army officers, even those in charge of the BBC; and it consequently aroused the anger of the middle classes.

I remember being attacked by an irate upper middle-class lady at a hotel while on location, who was driven to fury by the very thought of Monty Python. Of course we had already forestalled their criticism by mocking their very own letters of protest to the BBC in the programme. I suppose it's this subversive mockery, even attacking their forms of protest, which appealed very strongly to the young.

It still appeals to the young, a new generation in America discovers it every three years, so that I suspect its appeal is on a Freudian level of protest—against the authority figures under whom we all grow up. And yet somehow have to learn to reject. But as for a political view, I think Python shows a healthy contempt for both left and right."

Fashion

Caring rebels

Labour must listen to the protesting consumer, says Charlotte du Cann

It was during the last election that the Labour Party began to worry about style. It realised, rather too late, that it paid to have politicians who stood out, who knew how to smile on television and wear the right suit. They discovered what the Tories had known all along: style sells. And in a decade where advertising is practically an art form and everyone knows the price of everything, who sells most wins.

Style and socialism, however, are not the best commercial partners. Style in the eighties was about individuality, being a whizzkid, getting ahead of the rest. In this climate, a party which insisted that we are all the same and that we should all work together, was going nowhere fast. The more the Labour Party declared it cared, the worse it looked, the less people wanted to know.

Labour's failure in the years of supermaterialism and don't care power dressing, was that it could not market its ethic successfully. It failed to understand the style of opposition. Opposition style in the UK is based on disaffection: it is about dressing as you like and not giving a damn. It is not about looking respectable and caring about the community in a quiet unobtrusive way. The only socialists who understood this were condemned by the party for their vanity: Derek Hatton for wearing the sharpest suit in the north, and Ken Livingstone for not bothering to wear one at all.

Opposition style has never taken up politics or education, the credo of futurists, because it thrives in a state of nihilism. British hip comes out of the urban prole belief in No Future, the glamour of the outsider. The Labour Party failed to grasp that the received way out of the ghetto is not thinking along the same lines but looking better than anyone else, being a star, kicking the system.

To be fair, British socialism has not had much of a wardrobe to entice anyone anywhere. It has no Left Bank chic; no rebel student nostalgia (Tom Courtney in *Dr Zhivago* in cap and wire-rimmed glasses); no retro-romantic uniform like the Mao jacket. It contains nothing but shabby grey suits, trade union ties and Keir Hardie's cap (and even that was stolen and marketed rather better by the other side keen to promote the Victorian values of Hovis bread).

The sartorial history of the Labour Party is a line of ill-fitting coats: faded Fabians in corduroy jackets; Harold Wilson in a Gannex mac; Michael Foot in a donkey jacket. The nearest it has got to youthful rebellion was a stereotype from the seventies, someone from a polytechnic in an anorak and a woolly hat being earnest. And there is nothing more of an anathema to style than small-time sincerity—a liberal changing the

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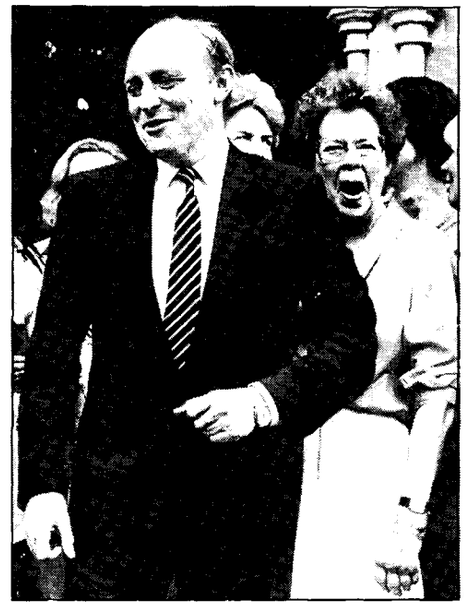


The Independent

Television

What big teeth you have?

Paul Morley predicts our sponsored future

minutes of the meeting instead of the world.

The party is lucky then that, in the nineties, fashion will not be as important as it has been. Now that materialism is old hat, getting the label right won't be a priority. The opposition has shifted to another direction. And another style.

At the beginning of the decade it was shocking to be greedy and selfish, shocking to wear wing collars, taffeta ballgowns, Italian tracksuits and designer labels. Now the tactics have changed. The most rebel thing you can say now is that you don't care about mortgages or money (even if you have both). You could have spotted this shift on the catwalks and in the clubs from a long way off: the yuppy short skirts changing into hippy long skirts, the Acid House love, peace and day-glo, the street-wearing of post-industrial "real" dungarees and overalls. The new wave is all about global attitudes and not a million miles away from the old radical chic of the sixties. It is not about wearing Japanese suits and making jokes about Mrs Thatcher.

If the Labour Party were really smart, it would not bother with getting the boss into Armani and turning Mrs K into Jackie O. It would forget about its Red Wedge counter-blast culture and boasting that Paul Boateng wears Paul Smith. It should realise that the bestsellers of the year have not been style guides or alternative satires but poems about whales and shopping guides to ecological washing powders. That the most sought-after accessories have not been Chanel handbags but anti-apartheid baseball caps, third-world moneybelts and T-shirts that oppose the destruction of the rainforest. Don't care has been made to care. But not in a way anyone would have imagined.

So far the only party to market this successfully, has been the Green Party, which has cleverly given protest style to the individual, the consumer. In spite of a dearth of funds for advertising, no personalities, no presence in parliament and a pretty dodgy manifesto, it is the party in fashion. Unless the Labour Party starts sorting out working wardrobe, it is going to be relegated to the dressing-up box for another decade.

Think about this, if you can, if you have to. There are 900 hours of the madly common and fabulously plebeian Australian soap, or is it an oven cleaner, *Prisoner Cell Block H*, recorded and available for viewing. This means that the invisible people who found themselves ridiculously responsible for this eery fantasy produced two hours of the coarse stuff every week for nine years. What the hell happened?

Did they just forget to stop, or couldn't they think of an ending? Was there some sexually flattened, aesthetically bankrupt Warholist strapped behind the cell scenes patiently drawing out a creepy crawling designer monotony? Perhaps the ridiculously responsible really did feel that they were making some compelling points about woman's potency, isolation, hopelessness, or maybe someone just lost a bet and had to produce a mass of work conceived solely to unhinge future anthropologists.

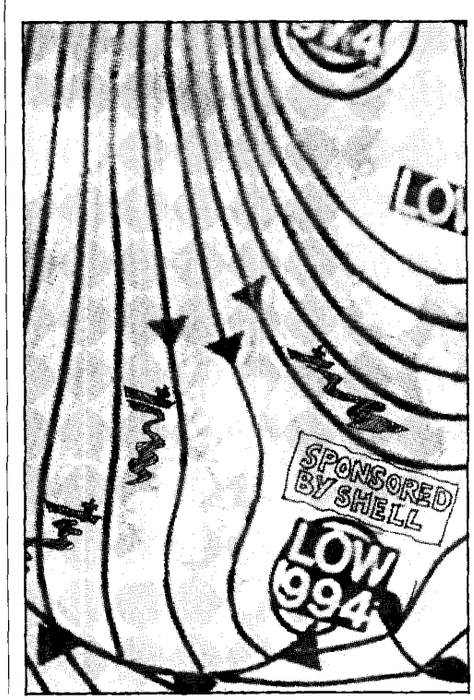
Or were the makers paid by the hour: were they *sponsored*, by some Sydney bed-sheet company? Nine hundred hours of the coarse stuff: that's at least 10,000 glimpses of sheets. Is *Prisoner* a sighting of some tele-future where successful programmes, the regularly watched, don't die, they don't fade away, they just keep coming, and coming back, as long as the sheets sell.

You can always tell what the future of TV is going to be like, because it's already on the screen, in bits and pieces, in fits and starts. It's not going to get any *better*, there's just going to be a kind of moving visual inflation, and moral deflation. There's just going to be more and more of what we've seen and heard already: more and more of less and less. What role will sponsored TV play in this increase of the sheer weight and presence of television, its intimidating entangling omnipresence? Will sponsored TV radically emphasise the normal bias towards the simple and sensational that commercial advertising always forces?

Questions are being asked because Channel 4's Michael Grade has been warning us about the recent gentle drift towards TV sponsorship: companies paying directly for programmes or sections of programmes instead of keeping a certain distance and just paying for as many seconds of air time as they can get. So far, it's all been very meek, and British, and even tasteful, indicating that sponsored TV could simply mean an attractive range of thoughtfully designed logo's and emblems sitting pretty during programme credits.

The proud PowerGen logo now appears at the end of the ITV national weather forecast. PowerGen pays £500,000 a year for this privilege, and are probably delighted the way their logo shows up the bulky new ITV logo, which when reduced resembles Clive James' right eyebrow, and which has sent ITV's image further down the market tube than SKY. As of yet there has been no discernible PowerGen interference in the weather or the way it's forecast, but with such a lovely logo, who knows what they have up their sleeves. What big teeth you have, PowerGen.

We are also told that Granada's daily magazine *This Morning*—which is recommended to those who have lost their mind and don't want to find it—is to have a few minutes of pet advice sponsored by a dogfood company. This all seems very harmless, even if the presenter has to wear a Pedigree Chum apron or appear drunk and unshaven when he handles a rival food. Isn't



Nigel Paige

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HALF MOON

213 Mile End Rd, 50 yds Stepney Green Tube

THEATRE

BLOOD WEDDING
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13 Actors and Musicians in Passion, Honour & Vengeance Under The Sun
Opens Tue Oct 3rd at 7:30pm

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CAROL GRIMES & IAN SHAW - BRAVE EYES
A unique collaboration between two of the Finest Singers in Britain backed by 8-piece band
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In the Preface to "The Secret Doctrine" there is the following: "These truths are in no sense put forward as a **revelation;** nor does the author claim the position of a revealer of mystic law, now made public for the first time in the world's history. For what is contained in this work is to be found scattered throughout thousands of volumes embodying the scriptures of the great Asiatic and early European religions, hidden under myth and symbol and hitherto left".

For more information write to:

THE BLAVATSKY TRUST, (NSM 19), P.O. BOX 16, LONDON W3 6HS.

Organic Wine

PASTURES OF PLENTY?

Clive Gilbert introduces this month's NSS organic wine offer

'California and Arizona I make all your crops,
Then it's north up to Oregon to gather your hops,
Dig the beet from your ground,
Cut the grapes from your vine
To set on your table your light sparkling wine.'

Not much has changed in the fifty years since Woody Guthrie sang about the hardships of America's migrant workers in the 1930's. The labourers may no longer be Okies foreclosed off dustbowl farms but Mexicans, Guatemalans and Hondurans variously fleeing rural dispossession, urban poverty or civil war.

Working conditions in the vineyards are made infinitely worse by agricultural chemicals that devastate fragile ecological systems and threaten the health of the workers.

A few years ago it was shown that deformed babies were being born to mothers who had worked as casual labour in the vineyards of California, Oregon and Washington. The likely culprit, a derivative of the defoliant Agent Orange is only one of the many chemicals commonly used in the vineyards of America and Europe and known to be carcinogens, mutagens or allergens.

In fact, benomyl (an arachnicide), maneb (used against mildew) and zinc ethylenebis dithiocarbamate (all-purpose fungicide) - all known to interfere with normal foetus development - were banned in California in the mid-70's but then reinstated in a burst of deregulation during the Reagan presidency.

The tragedy is that it is all so unnecessary. Paul Frey is one of a growing number of Californian winemakers who has turned to organic production "as a way of saving the land and saving my soul". Two bottles of his dark, superbly rich, plummy **1986 Zinfandel** (California's native grape) feature in this month's *New Statesman & Society Organic Wine Offer.*

Each case of 12 wines costs just £47.95 including delivery. For every case bought, *Vinature,* the importers, will make a donation to the United Farm Workers of California campaign to prevent chemical abuse in the vineyards.

Alongside the Zinfandel are examples of the high quality being achieved by French winemakers who have banished chemicals from the vineyard and the winery. Jean-Michel Chort's **white Bordeaux** is crisp, dry and fruity and his **1987 Claret** warm and smooth and ready for drinking. **Vin de Pays de Pezenas** is a full-bodied Mediteranean red wine which will accompany any strongly flavoured food. Thierry and Martine Lecomte's **Gaillac Blanc,** however, is a delightfully fragrant medium-dry wine that needs nothing more than a simple salad to bring out its riches. Your case contains two of each of these wines.

The remaining wines (one of each) are both classics. Guy Chaumont's **1987 Chardonnay,** the world's most sought-after white grape, is straight-down-the-line Burgundy, a beautifully-balanced dry, full-bodied wine. Less well-known is **Blanquette de Limoux,** one of the most celebrated and certainly the most ancient of French methode champenoise wines. A blend of Mauzac, Chardonnay and Chenin grapes, it is exquisitely dry with myriad tiny bubbles.

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Please send..... New Statesman Society cases at £47.95 each.
I enclose a cheque/postal order for £..... payable to VINATURE.
NAME AND ADDRESS (Block capitals please)

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TEL. .....
Special delivery instructions (if necessary)

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Offer applies to UK mainland deliveries only (elsewhere ask for a quote). Allow 28 days for delivery.

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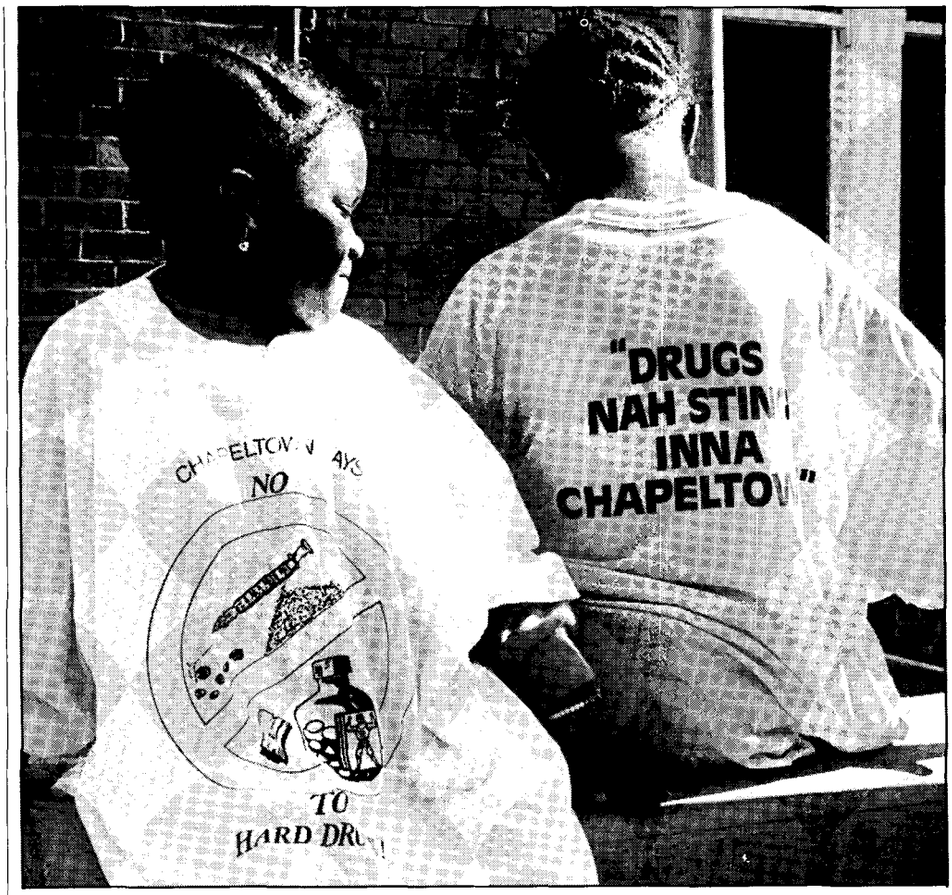
there a possibility that sponsorship will keep alive topics and programmes that might well be scorched to death as cable and satellite go for the jugular with trash and merciless selectivity: things like pet advice, and more seriously, *Equinox* or *Survival*?

Grade sees the shy whimsical move towards sponsorship as "the thin edge of the wedge"; the thick end being a gradual erosion of editorial independence, and further compromises to the golden oldies of quality and standards. The final reduction of television to a relentless state of simple matters and comfort and joy which is merely about ratings and sales. A catalogue of products and services interspersed with tightly controlled highly censored news, opinions, dramas and mostly fun and games. The ultimate stripping away of the nerve and capacity to deliver minority programmes, or the eccentric, or the challenging. Is Grade paranoid, is this some melodramatic Noam Chomsky conspiracy, or is the day not far off when commerical concerns will do the planning and controlling of what we are allowed to watch: and just how truly different will the sets of standards be, between those who see television as the best way to sell their products and those who love television as a way of transmitting their view of the world?

Will sponsorship lead to a tele-space where viewers take it for granted that Alistair Burnett is wearing an M & S equivalent of Nigel Mansell's racing overalls? Anna Ford is dressed by Jaspar Conran, whose credit is bigger than the editors, Desmond Lynam sports a British telecom baseball hat. A local news bulletin omits to mention redundancies, or even a fatal accident, at a Coca-Cola factory because the programme is sponsored by Coca-Cola. Anneka Rice builds a badly needed childrens playground in a forgotten hole outside Belfast because, after all, only Heineken can do this.

Or will it all be far more subtle, this change in control from those who conscientiously attend to the delicate problems of *leading* an audience with as much commitment and compassion as they can muster, to those who cynically make their minds up what people want and blankly hand it out? As always the questions lead to considerations of exactly what television is for, why we watch it, what we expect from it, and how much it really controls us, and changes us. The way television is spreading out and narrowing down, as if to fulfil Grade's worse fears of mindlessness crushing merit, it appears that we are prepared to use TV primarily as anaesthetic. TV sponsors will be greedy to exploit that passivity: Grade's views could quickly become quaint and heroic, as a special kind of expertise is lost forever, let go by our self-indulgence and acceptance.

The nightmare of the controllers is that we just want to be entertained, we're happiest when we limit ourselves and that telesponsorship passionately based on the belief that commercial advertising is one of the foundations of our society, will produce 900 hours of Jeremy Beadle for every *Eleventh Hour*. Think about that, if you can, if you have to. It may be the point of television, why it's there, a waste of space—exactly what we deserve.



Music

Crackdown

Max Farrar on the rise of the anti-drug sound

Crack is the current media hype, with blame predictably being aimed at The Yardies. Britain's Department of Education and Science has allocated £7 million for drug education programmes, and the US government is providing legal and military aid for the Colombian government's "war" on the cocaine barons.

But it's now accepted that government advertising initiatives have little impact on drug abusers. There has to be direct contact with the communities at risk. So it's a hopeful sign that one part of the black music business, the DJ recordings which rarely reach the white public, are taking drug abuse seriously. The recent spate of twelve-inch 45s attacking cocaine and crack is a response to a real problem.

While the government toys with training programmes, in Leeds's Chapeltown one pirate radio, WYBC, is playing these records regularly. This pirate sees itself as an educational service. WYBC stands for West Yorkshire Broadcasting Corporation, but some DJs use the WYBC to say "We're young, black and conscious". Culture T, one of the organisers of the station, puts "bright" in place of "black": "We play black music, including jazz and soul, but this music is international, it's not just for black people. We play music that carries a message."

One of the messages is "Don't use cocaine or crack". WYBC is an integral part of the community which contains the crack users. Its organisers and its vast team of unpaid DJs all live in Chapeltown. They know the crack users and dealers and they are seeing its consequences.

Some of the records, a chant over a fairly basic backing track, keep the message very simple. Frankie Wilmott's "Give Me No Rock" (Musical Ambassador) sets one theme, with its repeated refrain: "Give me sensimilia, no cocaine/Cocaine will blow my brain/Leave me insane." Roni and Daddie Freddie ("Put It Down", Briggie Records) borrow Wilmott's lines: "Sensimilia give me good vibration and deeper meditation", but the urgency of Roni's "Put it down, I beg you put it down", "it" being crack, is given frightening force by Freddie's deliberately distorted vocal responses.

Other records elaborate the plea by giving much more detail about the effects of drugs. Clement Irie's "Kolo-Ko" (Greensleaves) tells us that "coke no ramp/coke no joke", will "sap down your body/make you look like a pin" and will "make you sell off everything". Crucial Robbie and the Offbeat Posse's "Don't Sniff Coke" (Y & D Records) says: "Coke me no sniff, coke me no smoke/From you take it, there's no hope/You feel like your life it a slide down a slope/Your mind and your body me say that can't cope."

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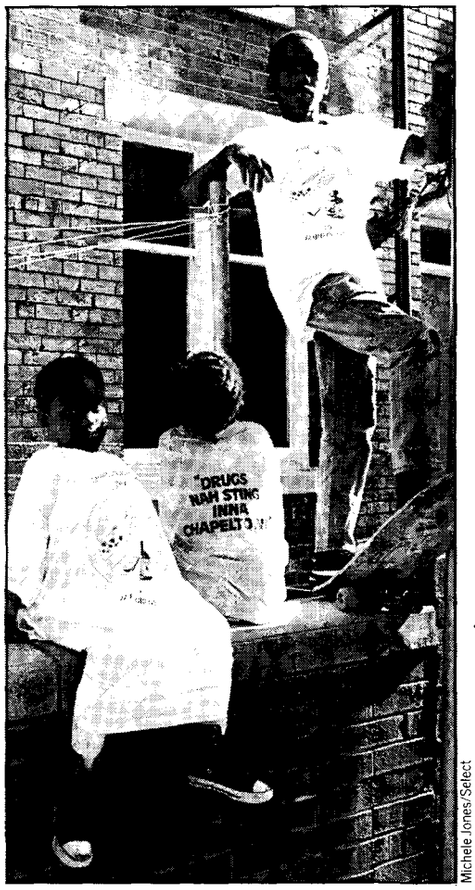

Michele Jones/Select

Young, black and conscious: kids in Chapeltown wear the message with pride

Music is woven into the fabric of inner-city black life, and the pirate radios are broadcasting virtually 24 hours a day. WYBC has a varied programme, which includes a new fortnightly magazine put together by a radical community group, African Emphasis. Sankofa (the great African communicator) discussed the harmful effect, medical and social, of cocaine and crack in a recent broadcast. But it is the records which are likely to reach most people, since they employ cultural references whose meanings are so direct.

Crucial Robbie tells the sad story of Trevor, a man who's got it made, with a six-rope gold chain, a BMW, a Rolex, a Christian wife and a beautiful daughter, until "Him start using nose like a vacuum cleaner". His wife leaves him for another man and he has to sell everything to buy more of the white powder.

Among the youth workers preparing a major drugs campaign in Chapeltown there has been a fierce debate about the use of sensimilia and other forms of cannabis, some arguing that to avoid hypocrisy they have to campaign against *all* drug use. While the compromise is to limit the campaign to hard drugs, it is significant that all the youth centres have banned their users from smoking weed on the premises. It might also be significant that I've yet to hear Top Cat's paean of praise for sensimilia, "Me Love Me Sess" (Dance Vibes), on WYBC.

Culture T, who produced Frankie Wilmott's "Give Me No Rock", says: "We want DJs to provide information and express opinions. We can't insist, but we quietly persuade DJs to be more conscious in what they are playing. In my show, I always ask people to listen carefully to lyrics which have something serious to say. WYBC says no to hard drugs."

The surge in hard drug use in Chapeltown has sent a shock wave through a community which is sophisticated in its understanding of drugs. Records like Macka B's "Drink Too Much" (on the Ariwa album *Looks are Deceiving*) and Demon Rocka's "Hard Drugs" (Unity) rip into alcohol and ecstasy abusers because of their perceived anti-social behaviour, but it is the behaviour of crack users which is the cause for concern.

Culture T has observed some terrible goings-on among crack users, and he fears that the habit is spreading. As the drug murders proceed apace in Colombia, guns are being used by crack dealers in some of Britain's inner cities. At the August Bank Holiday carnival in Leeds, the Palace Youth Project's troupe were decked out in T-shirts with the slogan "Drugs Nah Sting Inna Chapeltown". The battle within the black community between the "conscious" and the "make yourself unconscious" factions will, in the long run, be as significant as the "war" in Colombia.

All records referred to are obtainable through Jet Star, Tel: 01 961 5818.

ACTT / BETA / NGA / NUJ
& the Public Service Broadcasting Campaign

1989 Labour Party Conference
FRINGE MEETING

Whose Choice?
Whose Freedom?

DEMOCRACY & THE FUTURE OF THE MEDIA

Alan Sapper (General Secretary ACTT)
Tony Hearn (General Secretary BETA)
Tony Dubbins (General Secretary NGA)
Harry Conroy (General Secretary NUJ)
Brenda Dean (General Secretary SOGAT)
Mark Fisher MP (Labour Media Spokesperson)

Chair: Bryan Griffiths (President NGA)

PICKWICK SUITE, BEDFORD HOTEL
KINGS ROAD, BRIGHTON
TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER • 6.30 pm

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

THE FEMINIST LIBRARY is now at 5 Westminster Bridge Rd, SE1, and needs more volunteers to help staff the library and undertake a variety of jobs for which no specialist library skills are required. The Feminist Library is open on Saturdays only during Sept. from 10 - 6, and from the first week of October will be open on Tuesdays, 11 - 8, Saturdays and Sundays, 2 - 5pm. For further information call 928 7789.

BRENT Bereavement Project is looking for volunteers to visit recently bereaved people in their own homes and provide ongoing emotional support. Full training given. Travel expenses paid. For further information please contact Valerie Wise 459 6818.

PHOBIC ACTION needs mobile volunteers to befriend people with phobias/severe anxiety and assist self-recovery. East London area. Training course starts on 14.9.89. Contact Emma, Phobic Action, Greater London House, 547/551 High Road, London E.11 4PR. Tel: 558 3463.

ARK (environmental movement) is looking for volunteers to help our membership department. Any time you can give in our Parsons Green or Westbourne Pk offices during office hours will be very much appreciated. Further details please call Paul Marshall on 968 6780.

LEONARD CHESHIRE HOME for ten people with a mental handicap in S.E. Lonndon requires volunteer Care Assistants. Accommodation & expenses + allowance paid . Contact Nick Baxter/ Louise Child 01 659 8962.

JOIN TOOLS for Self Reliance in practical solidarity with the Third World. Come to the London workshop to donate or refurbish hand tools for working communities in Africa and Latin America. For info. on opening hours and local groups, ring 284 1311, or visit Unit a, 47 Allcroft Road London NW5.

BONDWAY NIGHTSHELTER is an emergency provision for homeless men, require volunteers (aged 18 - 30) to work for approx. 6 months. Allowance and accommodation provided. We recruit throughout the year so welcome applications from those wishing to be considered at a later stage. For further details ocntact: Volunteer Co-ordinator, P O Box 374, London SW8 1SJ. Enclosing a S.A.E. (due to interview restrictions, applicants should be resident in U.K.).

WOMEN'S ORGANISATION urgently seeks Treasurer to oversee the finances of the organisation, to liaise with accountants, Inland Revenue, etc. Women Against Sexual Harassment is a voluntary organisation which advises and supports women who are experiencing sexual harassment at work. Please contact Valerie Mainstone 01 833 0222.

LONDON FRIEND the voluntary lesbian & gay counselling organisation is looking for more face to face counsellors. We actively encourage applications from women, people with disabilities & people from ethnic minorities. Experience counselling lesbians & gay men is essential. Please ring 01- 837 2782 (day times) for further information.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It apears three times a week on Thames Television, at 6.20pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

LISTEN TO CHILDREN WEEK:

Tuesday 3 October - NSPCC CAMPAIGN

This week the NSPCC are highlighting their on-going Putting Children First Campaign with a week of activities which they have designated 'Listen To Children' Week. Jackie talks to author and child psychologist, Penelope Leach, about our attitudes to children.

For a free copy of the NSPCC's Listen to Children pack, write to: Thames Help!, PO Box 11, London NW1 3HZ.

Wednesday 4 October - PARENT NETWORK

Parent Network, an alliance of London parents, run a 12 week educational course in parenthood which emphasises good communication. We look at how the course works and talk to parents who have taken part in it.

If you would like to know more about Parent Network's courses phone 01-388 8282 on the night, or write to them at:
Parent Network, 44 - 46 Caversham Road, London NW5 2DS.

Thursday 5 October - NEWPIN

For more than three years Kay Watkins has been going almost daily to a unique drop-in centre called Newpin in Southwark. In this programme she tells us how the Newpin experience has transformed her life and that of her family.

For more information about Newpin, write to: Newpin, Sutherland House, Sutherland Square, London SE17 3EE.

THAMES TELEVISION XXI

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

NICARAGUA HEALTH FUND need volunteers to work during the day in our small, friendly office near Oxford Circus. The work is routine but varied. Travel expenses paid and as much tea and coffee as you can drink. Ring Joy or Sarah on 01 580 4292.

I AM DESPERATELY seeking Susan, Jim, Hilary or in fact anyone who is young, fit, a driver and in need of a challenging low-paid "job" for a few months. Free accommodation + pocket money W. London. Steve Cribb 01-560 2605 or 01 577 3226.

RELEASE legal & drugs agency, needs volunteers for its 24 hour helpline. On Wednesday 4th Oct. 7 pm at the Release office an introductory evening is being held to explain the nature of the work. If you are interested but unable to attend, or want more details contact Catherine Phillips, 169 Commercial St; London E1 6BW. Tel: 01-377 5905.

VOLUNTEERS needed to assist in the running of a Saturday Access Centre, WC1. The Access Centre provides a safe place for parents and children who live apart to meet and spend time together. One Saturday per fortnight; local fares and lunch expenses paid. For information tel: Christine Renouf - 01-377 9141/ Jenny Hale 01-278 2424.

CONNEXIONS – Independent arts project in Haringey, set up to enable people with disabilites to participate in arts activities, need volunteers for both one-off and ongoing events. Coming up is the 3rd Connexions project (ongoing). We need volunteers to escort, assist workshop leaders etc. Please contact Jan Rubidge/ Kiki Gale at Connexions, 340 The Broadway, London N10 1DJ Tel: 01 883 8598.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING and CND needs some help! Lots of cards, wrapping paper and other goods to be sent out. Help also needed in CND shop. Please ring Laura or Mark on 250 4010. Travel & lunch expenses paid. (Nearest tube Old St.).

HAVE YOU A FEW spare hours per week? Could you become a volunteer tutor, helping Southwark Probation Service clients improve their literacy skills? A new training course starts in Nov. Open meeting for all those interested at 2 pm on Thursday Oct. 5th at Summer House, Summer Rd, Peckham, London SE15. Further details from the Solo project, 01-252 8022.

F.L.A.T. (Facility for Living and Assessment Together) requires Community Project Assistants. The F.L.A.T. Project trains and assesses people who have learning difficulties (mental handicap) to live more independently in the commmunity. Hours: 35 p/w and a personal allowance of £154.76 p/m free accommmodation and bills, excluding personal tel. calls. Interested? Contact F.L.A.T. on 01 403 1542.

HARMOOD Community Centre in Kentish Town, NW1, has a varied programme of leisure, sports and educational activities for local residents, and is urgently seeking a volunteer fundraiser, full time or part-time. We are a registered charity. Please contact Anneke on 01 485 9850.

HOUSEBOUND LEARNERS Project - Wandsworth - requires local volunteers to share their learning with a housebound person. You will attend a weekly adult education class in an interesting subject. You do not need to be an expert but you must be reliable and interested in learning and sharing ideas. A regular commitment of 4-5 hrs p/w is involved. Expenses paid. For more details phone 780 1162 or write: Housebound Learners Project, Hotham School, Charlwood Road, London SW15 1PN.

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Classified Advertising

Display advertisement copy to be set – Monday noon
Lineage – Friday (prior to publication on following week)
Camera ready artwork – Tuesday
Classified Display Rates:
Standard Rate: £18.00 per s.c.c.
Voluntary Organisations: £11.00 per s.c.c.
Linage Rates: 50p per word (minimum 20 words) Box No. £2.50
All advertisements subject to VAT at 15%
Correspondence should be addressed to
Classified Advertisement Department
New Statesman & Society,
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ
Advertising Staff
Chris Gallagher (Acting Classified Manager)
Michael Breen (Sales Executive)
Dominique Wright (Sales Executive)
Linda Ring (Advertising Secretary)
Dawn King (Production)
Telephone: 01-739-1645
Fax 01-739-9307
Telex 28449

Appointments

Head of Child Care

Head of Child Care required at High View School, Lambourne Road, Chigwell Essex. Salary £11,475 to £12,729 p.a. An interesting and challenging post at this Residential Special School. High View caters for children from 11 to 16+ with learning difficulties but from September 1991 will be re-designated to cater for the educational needs of boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The leadership role of out of school time is now shifting to the Care Team.

The Head of Care will be fully involved as a member of the Senior Management Team in implementing these changes.

Candidates should be well qualified and have relevant, recent experience. The post is resident, three bedroom house or flat available. Chigwell is a very pleasant area close to countryside and with easy access into London. The school is set in 13 acres of land.

This is a re-advertisement, previous applicants need to re-apply. For application forms and further particulars please contact the Headteacher at the school, informal visits are welcomed. Tel: 01 500 6660.

Essex County Council
Education

◆ STANDBY STAFF ◆

SOCIAL WORKERS

- Excellent Rates
- Flexibility
- Holiday Pay
- Phone Julia Kwest

01-377 5789

OV SELECTION

have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers.

Phone Odette Veazey,
OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House,
15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT.
01-828 8345.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

01-739 1645

Lothian Regional Council

Department of Social Work

RESIDENTIAL & DAY CARE

CO-ORDINATOR

£13,113-£14,193
SIGHTHILL CHILDREN'S CENTRE, EDINBURGH

Qualified, experienced person required for this 40 place Day Care Unit for Children under five. Responsibilities include day to day management, organisation and planning of the unit. Commitment and good understanding of children's developmental needs, family dynamics, staff management/development liaison and community networks essential.

This is a re-advertisement and candidates will have their applications held over for consideration.

Informal enquiries to Muriel McDonald, Assistant Principal (Children), Tel. 031-553 8209.

Ref. 5801AAA

NURSERY TRAINING MANAGER

£13,824-£15,099
WOODHALL NURSERY, 485 LANARK ROAD, EDINBURGH

This small (1.4 acres) Nursery has been run on a partially commercial basis for and with mentally handicapped people. We require an experienced Nurseryman/Horticulturist who is also experienced/understanding of the needs of people with learning difficulties. Applicants should have extensive experience of nursery work and landscape maintenance of which there are a number of contracts. As the Nursery's main objective is to offer work experience and job training for people with a mental handicap, experience of and a positive attitude to them as fellow workers is essential. A former qualification in horticulture is necessary and qualifications in social services (CSS, CQSW, DTMHA) are desirable.

For further information and informal visit, contact Ian Huggan, Assistant Principal Officer (Rehab), Tel. 031-554 4301 Ext. 8258/8325.

Application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, 7 Shrub Place, Edinburgh. Tel. 031-554 3997 (Answer phone machine in operation 24 hours per day)

Closing date: 20.10.89.

FIELD SERVICES

SOCIAL WORKER
GENERIC (ELDERLY)

£10,596-£13,824
PILTON AREA OFFICE

This busy Area Team requires an experienced worker committed to direct work with elderly people and their families and to the imaginative development of local services on an inter-disciplinary and inter-agency basis.

CQSW/CSS and sound practical experience essential. An interest in mental health work an advantage.

Informal enquiries to Patrick Begley, Area Officer and Iain Luke, Senior Social Worker, Tel. 031-343 3181.

REF. 0043ASA.

Application forms are available from the Personnel Officer, 7 Shrub Place, Edinburgh. Tel. 553 8334 (Answer phone in operation 24 hours per day).

Closing date: 6.10.89.

The Lothian Regional Council is an equal opportunities employer and will prevent discrimination, particularly on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, religious belief, political belief, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin, age, trade union activity, responsibility for dependants or employment status.

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HEARTSEARCH/LINAGE BOOKING FORM

Special Offer

BOOK THREE — GET ONE FREE

If you book three consecutive ads you get an extra one absolutely free

You can now reach more than 250,000 readers every week with a small advertisement in *New Statesman & Society*.

If you need to promote meetings, seminars, Ronnie Barker's autobiography, property to let, or if you simply want to meet a soulmate through heartsearch then send us the completed coupon with your remittance

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Box Numbers £2.50 extra

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Please complete the coupon below and send with remittance or credit card number.

AD TEXT (BLOCK CAPS) or use separate sheet

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NAME .....

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No. of weeks ..... Remittance £.....

Or charge my Access/Visa/Barclaycard No .....

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Post coupon to:
Classified Department,
New Statesman & Society,
Freepost, London, E2 8BR

Health Services
Management
Unit

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

A Conference to focus on the experience of Managers actively involved in implementing the White Paper

"FROM THEORY INTO PRACTICE"

DECEMBER 1, 1989

To be held at

THE PICCADILLY HOTEL, MANCHESTER

Applications for Self-Governing Status are being targetted for March 31, 1990. Districts and Regions are required to report on plans to transfer operational responsibilities and non-core activities during the autumn. This conference draws together speakers from National, Regional and District perspectives as well as emergent Self-Governing Units to share experiences and describe progress to date.

If you would like further information and an application form for this conference please contact either: Roger French or Kay Stevens at:

The Health Services Management Unit
University of Manchester
Devonshire House
Precinct Centre
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL
Tel: 061-275 2908

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations

RESEARCH FELLOWS

Applications are invited for two posts to work on a project, financed by the Home Office, on the development of ethnic monitoring procedures in the delivery of public sector services. The project is intended to establish procedures for ethnic monitoring in service delivery in co-operation with a selected number of local authorities and other agencies. It is hoped to initiate a service offering advice and guidance on a consultancy basis.

POST ONE requires a person to work on developing and implementing ethnic monitoring procedures. Candidates should possess a degree in the social sciences and a post-graduate qualification. Experience in designing monitoring and evaluation systems in service delivery, possibly in local government or elsewhere in the public sector, will be an advantage.

POST TWO requires someone to provide technical support in the design of quantitative monitoring systems. Applicants should have a degree in social statistics, sociology or social geography and be familiar with the analysis of large data sets.

Both salaries will be within the Research Range 1A: £10,485 - £16,665 and appointments will be for two years in the first instance. Secondment from an existing post would be considered in both cases.

Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Personnel Office, University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL quoting reference No 9/A/89/48. The closing date for applications is 21 October 1989. This is a re-advertisement previous applicants need not re-apply.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

AS A MATTER OF FAX: 01 739 9307

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ilea *Working in Education*

Responsibility for education in Inner London transfers from the ILEA to the Inner London Boroughs on 1.4.90. Staff employed at schools and colleges at that time may transfer to the successor borough by statutory order, maintaining their ILEA terms and conditions. The transfer of other staff is still under discussion, but up to date information will be provided in a letter supplied with every application form.

CLERKS DEPARTMENT
Majority Party Secretariat,
The County Hall, SE1 7PB.

Policy Officer

£17,427-£19,707 pa inc.

This is an unique opportunity to gain experience of working for elected Members in a large local education authority. Located in the Majority Party Secretariat, you will report directly to the Leader of the ILEA and provide him with policy advice and support.

You will have an understanding of the principal policies and priorities of the ILEA and be interested in education issues. Good oral and written communication skills are required to assist the Leader in the preparation of speeches, presentations and reports.

Application forms and further details are available from PER/REC/APT, Room 366 (Main Building), The County Hall, London SE1 7PB or telephone 01-633 8732 (ansaphone).

Suitable for job share.

Closing date for the return of application forms is Friday 6th October 1989.

Inner London Education Authority

ILEA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

NUFFIELD COLLEGE
OXFORD OX1 1NF

PRIZE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Applications are invited from graduates wishing to undertake research in some aspect of Economics, Politics, Sociology (including some aspects of Social Psychology), Recent Economic, Social or Political History, Industrial Relations, Management Studies, Public and Social Administration, or International Relations. Candidates must be not more than five years beyond first graduation or at a comparable stage in their academic career. The Fellowships will be for three years subject to completion of a doctorate in an approved period, and will provide accommodation and a salary or grant. Particulars from the Admissions Secretary. Applications by 28 October 1989.

LAMBETH

SERVICES WELL WORTH DEFENDING

Well worth working for.

Lambeth's policies and services are working to overcome the deprivation and disadvantage suffered within its inner-city multi-racial community. Creating and implementing the changes needed adds a challenging dimension to work with the Council and we are keen to recruit committed women and men to each of these posts.

It is important that all applicants have an understanding of the Council's equal opportunity policy and support the positive steps being taken to eradicate unfair discrimination. We would particularly like to hear from people capable of bringing an enthusiastic and innovative approach to the implementation of anti-racist and anti-sexist strategies within their area of work.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Race Relations Posts
£16,242-£17,394 pa inc.
(for all posts)

DEHCS provides protection to the people of Lambeth in relation to Health and Consumer issues. As part of our Anti-Racist Strategy we are making our services more responsive to the needs of black people, to combat and redress racial disadvantage and discrimination in respect of the services provided. The Directorate is split into two operational divisions:

Consumer Services Division
Includes three of the Consumer Advice Centres, Money Advice, Trading Standards, Weights and Measures, Consumer Protection, Safety and Licencing.

Environmental Health Division
Tackles problems such as poor housing conditions, environmental pollution, building control, infectious disease, food hygiene and control, noise, infestations and health and safety. The Directorate also provides consumer education and environmental educaton from its Corporate Services Section.

We are seeking to recruit people who have a sound working knowledge of Race Relations and Equal Opportunities and the related legislation to the following posts:

Senior Consumer Services Officers

Money Advice (Race Relations)

You must have experience of money advice services/issues in a multi-racial inner-city area, the ability to understand legislation, identify and investigate money related issues and the skills to redress disadvantage and promote consumer rights.
A good working knowledge of welfare benefits and money advice and good communication skills are essential.
Ref. E57.*

Consumer Advice (Race Relations)

You must have experience of consumer services and issues in a multi-racial inner-city area, the ability to understand legislation, identify and investigate consumer issues/problems and the skills to redress disadvantage and promote consumer rights. Good communication skills are essential.
Ref. E58.*

Investigations (Race Relations)

You must have experience of providing consumer protection enforcement services, an awareness of the consumer needs of black people, the ability to identify relevant issues and use enforcement powers to eliminate discriminatory trade practices.
Ref. E59.*

Education & Information (Race Relations)

You will need to have the ability to research and identify consumer needs and relate these to local authority services, produce reports and educational materials. You must be able to liaise with the Asian community, including community and voluntary groups, and be able to converse freely in at least one Asian language.
Ref. E60.*

For these posts you will need a knowledge and understanding of consumer protection and representation issues and the ability and skills to assist in training on these.

Senior Environmental Health Education Officers (Race Relations)
(2 posts)

You will need an awareness of how the Environmental Health Service operates and have the ability to identify disadvantage and to advise and report on solutions. You will also have appropriate experience to enable you to assist in the production of promotional/educational materials and to participate in training activities. One of these posts is specifically to work with the Asian community for which the ability to converse freely in at least one Asian language is required. Ref. E61.*

For all posts you will need to have an understanding of administrative systems to enable the monitoring and analysis of race data on services. You must demonstrate that you understand how a local authority works and how services can positively meet the needs of black people. The ability to liaise with black communities is essential. Applicants will be assessed solely on the information provided on their application form. It is essential, therefore, that you address yourself clearly to the requirements as outlined in the advert and personnel specification provided.

These posts are to be filled by Black Afro/Caribbean and or Black/Asian people under Section 5(2)(d) of the Race Relations Act 1976 who being of a particular racial group is a genuine occupational qualification.

These posts are also advertised under Section 48(i)(b) of the Sex Discrimination Act, where applications are particularly welcome from women who are under-represented in this area of work. Applications are also welcome from disabled people.

Further details are obtainable from: The Personnel Department, Directorate of Environmental Health and Consumer Services, London Borough of Lambeth, Ellen Kuzwayo House, 138-146 Clapham Park Road, London SW4 7DD. Tel: 01-622 6655 Ext. 156.

HOW TO APPLY

Always quote the appropriate reference number.

**Post suitable for job sharing.*

Closing dates for all posts 13th October 1989 unless otherwise indicated.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

As part of the Council's equal opportunity employment policy applications are invited from people regardless of race, creed, nationality, disability, age, sex or responsibility for children or dependants and from lesbians and gay men.

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health rights

DEVELOPMENT WORKER

21 hours a week, £13,434 (inc LW) pro rata (SO 1.29)

Our small, committed team needs someone to be responsible for membership development and for liaison with health-related groups. You must have good administrative and communication skills and fundraising experience. Knowledge of community groups, the voluntary sector, the NHS and current health issues is desirable, as are marketing and basic computer skills.

The post requires initiative, the confidence and ability to plan and work without supervision, and the willingness to become an active member of a dedicated team.

Applications to be postmarked no later than October 14, 1989.

For job description, application forms and more information please contact: Health Rights Ltd, 334 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1UQ. Telephone: 01-720 9811.

Health Rights is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Funded by London Boroughs Grant Scheme.

ARBOURS

Applications are now welcome for the

Arbours Association training in Psychotherapy

This is a three year programme which follows one year introductory course. The training leads to a Certificate in Psychotherapy and to membership of the Association of Arbours Psychotherapists and our referral network.

The training is an intensive programme of lectures and seminars which cover the major aspects of analytically-oriented psychotherapy.

The course also offers a unique opportunity for direct clinical experience. This takes the form of extended placements at our Therapeutic Communities and Crisis Centre, where students, under supervision, can participate in group, individual and family therapy.

Students are required to be in psychotherapy throughout their training.

The course is designed to accommodate persons in full-time employment.

Some bursaries are available.

The next academic year starts from January, 1990.

For further details, please contact:
The Co-ordinator, The Arbours Association, 6 Church Lane, London N8. (Tel: 01-340 7646).

CHRISTIANS ABROAD

seeks an

INFORMATION OFFICER - ETHIOPIA

To play a vital role in communication between Relief and Development projects in Ethiopia and Aid Agencies in Europe and N. America.

This 2 year post, funded by CAFOD and based in Addis Ababa, is with the Christian Relief & Development Association which co-ordinates the work of over 60 agencies in Ethiopia.

The successful candidate will have experience of working with an NGO in Europe or N. America and excellent communication skills. Experience in journalism and an interest in photography would be an advantage. He/she must have Christian commitment and is likely to be a single person aged 25 - 45 years.

Air fares and accommodation provided and a good tax-free Sterling salary. For details write enclosing a c.v. and sae to: Recruitment Secretary, Christians Abroad, 1 Stockwell Green, London SW9 9HP.

International Peace Research Institute, Oslo Institutt for fredsforskning

ETHNIC CONFLICT & CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

Applications are invited for a position as coordinator of the Ethnic Conflict and Conflict Resolution Programme.

The coordinator would be in charge of the Programme office and deal with all aspects of practical research management and support. Skills in several of the following areas are needed: conference management, documentation, report writing, budgetting, teaching/training. English language capabilities should be excellent. Additional major languages would be an advantage.

Higher education in relevant social sciences and/or practical experience in international affairs, dealing with ethnic conflict and human rights issues in particular, is required.

The Programme supports research, training and dissemination related to ethnic conflicts and their resolution. Current areas of study include Sri Lanka, Uganda, South Africa, Indochina, and the Philippines.

The appointment will be for 3 to 5 years on a scale, depending on qualifications, up to NOK 236,000 p.a.

Women and candidates from the South are encouraged to apply. Further inquiries, to PRIO, Fuglehauggata 11, 0260 Oslo 2, Norway, are invited. Contact person: Kumar Rupesinghe. Phone: 472-55 71 50.

Closing date: November 1

BIRKBECK COLLEGE
University of London
CENTRE FOR EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES
WANTED
PART-TIME TUTORS FOR DAYTIME CERTIFICATES: CHILD CARE AND COMMUNITY or ISSUES IN COMMUNITY STUDIES
in Greenwich (Wed), Islington (Fri), Central London (Mon)
Must have committment to equal opportunitites
Childcare available.
Details from Jane Hoy, Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, 26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ. Tel. 01-636 8000 ext 3853/3872

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THE ASSOCIATION OF CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

is appointing its first

DIRECTOR

This new body, with a broad-based national membership, is being established to inform the public of the role of grant-making trusts and promote good practice between members. Its first Director should have a proven commitment to the voluntary sector — probably with executive experience in a membership-based organisation. An ability to recognise opportunities, and to articulate the Association's response, is essential.

Employment will be on a three year contract in the first instance, at a salary of c.£25,000 p.a.

Further details are available for prospective applicants from the Secretary, Association of Charitable Foundations, 34 North End Road, London W14 0SH. Closing date for applications, to include the names of two referees: 21st October, 1989.

Where people come first

Housing Department

Resettlement Worker

Job Share — 18 hours per week
£12,327 — £13,059 (inclusive)
Scale 6 (pro rata)

The Resettlement Team provides a housing assessment and resettlement service to single homeless people with special housing needs who are being rehoused under Part III of the Housing Act 1985.

You should be sensitive to the needs of the single homeless people and have knowledge of the housing options available to them.

We positively welcome applications from the black community as this group is currently under-represented in this section. Section 38(1) Race Relations Act 1976 applies.

We are committed to the implementation of equal opportunities.

We oppose discrimination based on age (up to 65), class, unrelated criminal convictions, culture, responsibility for dependents, marital status, nationality, race, religion and trade union activities.

We welcome applications from women, people from black and ethnic communities, people with disabilities, lesbians, gay men, people for whom English is not their mother tongue and unemployed people.

All registered disabled applicants will automatically be shortlisted.

Telephone ☎ 01-200 0200 (24 hour service) for an application form, or write on a postcard to: The Personnel Officer, London Borough of Southwark, 25 Commercial Way, London SE15 6DG.

Please quote reference NS/6/1072 and job title.

Last date for receipt of completed Application Forms: 23/10/89.

Downham Young People's Business Centre Limited

BUSINESS COUNSELLOR

Salary: £14,084

The Downham Young People's Business Centre is a Lewisham based organisation working with unemployed 18 - 25 year olds wishing to start up their own businesses.

We are looking for a Business Counsellor to organise and present sessions on business management, together with offering advice, encouragement and support to young people on an individual basis.

Applications are invited from people with proven ability to organise and train young people and applicants should have an awareness of the realities of youth unemployment.

For an application form and job description please contact 698 3464 (24 hour answerphone) or write to:

Downham Young People's Business Centre Limited,
5 Oakridge Road, Downham, Bromley, Kent. BR1 5QW.

Closing date: 27th October

The Downham Young People's Business Centre Limited is joint funded by the London Borough of Lewisham, the European Social Fund and the Commission for Racial Equality and is trying to be an equal opportunities employer.

CUSU

CITY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

NORTHAMPTON SQUARE, LONDON ECIV OBH 01-250 0955

COMMUNITY ACTION / WELFARE WORKER

City University Student's Union is looking for a Community Action / Welfare Worker for a part time position (39 weeks plus 6 weeks holiday, 25 hours per week). S/he will need to be a highly motivated person with some experience of community work. Some knowledge of welfare issues relevant to students would be useful.

Contact Sue Parsons on 01-250 0955 for a job description and an application form, or write to City University Students' Union, Northampton Square, London, EC1V OHB. CLOSING DATE 10TH OCTOBER 1989.

Publications

the Mental Health Digest

summaries of selected articles from the professional press

for people with an informed interest in matters of mental health

Annual subscription £3 (3 issues)
Single issue £1.20

Details from:
Mental Health Digest Ltd
77 Maldon Road
Brighton BN1 5BD.

Classified Advertising
For details ring
01 739 1645

Conferences

Childhood in the 1990's —Threats or Promises?

A National day conference, organised by the National Toy Libraries Association as part of Play Matters' Week, to consider some of the challenges facing children and their carers in the 1990's.

Thursday 26th October 1989 at International Students' House, Great Portland Street, London W1.

For further details contact: Play Matters, 68 Churchway, London NW1 1LT. Tel: 01 387 9592.

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Conferences

BMA FRINGE MEETING at the Labour Party Conference

An SOS for the NHS

Tuesday, October 3rd 1989 at 12.45pm

Regency Room, Old Ship Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton

Sandwiches and soft drinks will be available free of charge

SEXUALITY AND WELLBEING: Issues in Health Care. A conference for nurses and other health care workers. Issues include:- Women and Aids, Safer Sex, The 'Asexual Patient', Sexuality and Gender in Professional Training. Date: Saturday 9th December 1989. Venue: Princess Alexandra College of Nursing, Philpot Street, London E.1. 2EA. Phone: 377-7423. For information contact Anthony Pryce (Tutor).

Agenda

Rudolf Steiner House Autumn Lectures

Tuesdays 7.30 p.m.
beginning 3 October
A New Consciousness in the Sciences

Fridays 7.30 p.m.
beginning 20 October
Creation Myths and their Meaning for Today

Programme of these and other events available from
Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London NW1 6XT. Tube: Baker Street. Tel: 01-723 4400/8219.

Property File

Property For Sale

BOW E3, 1820 HOUSE. Five floors including self-contained basement flat. Gas central heating, large garden. House and flat available together or separately. House £190,000. Flat £85,000. Tel: 01 981 1167 (eves).

Property to Let

STOKE NEWINGTON N16. Small bedroom to let, 3-4 nights mid-week. Ideal for a commuting academic £8 per night. Contact John 249 0857.

Accommodation Wanted

TWO RESPONSIBLE, professional females seek accommodation at reasonable rent in the central London area. Short let or house sitting considered. Excellent references. Please call 01-870 2318 if you can help.

SOCIABLE, RESPONSIBLE, n/s post graduate seeks spacious, reasonable accommodation with easy access to Central London. Flat sitting/share. References available. Telephone 0288 354529.

Holiday/Travel

TRIED THE REST, now try the best. For low air fares to world-wide destinations inc Africa. SHL, 313a Hoe St, London, E17. 01-520-7911.

B & B CARDIFF CITY CENTRE. Bright comfortable and spacious. Close to Welsh Hills and sea. Vegetarians catered for. Tel. 0222 481384.

JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA Small group - escorted tours; low cost flights, JLA, 16 Devonshire Road, London, W4 2HD. or telephone (01) 747-8315.

Lectures

HAMPTON COURT PALACE. Ancient Greece. Tapestries. Heraldry. Stately Homes. List available. Illustrated lectures by Department of Environment lecturer. 949-8987.

Alexander Technique

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE. Individual lessons, evening classes and weekend workshops. Refia Sacks and Alan Mars, The Highbury Centre, 137 Grosvenor Avenue, London N5, 01-226 5805, 226 1815.

Meetings

THEOSOPHY. Informal meetings on Hypnotism/Psychism September every Sunday 8 - 9pm S.A.E for information, ULT, 62 Queens Gardens, London W2.

Booksellers

SCARCE BOOK SERVICE list wants 01-876 7254. Hammersmith Books, High Street. London SW13 9LR.

CHINA & Far East. 1,300 rare & o/p titles (history & politics). Catalogue from Oxus Books, 121 Astonville St, London SW18.

Employment Wanted

LOYAL, DISCREET, experienced, competent, PERSONAL MANAGER, available to work for compatible person. London-based. Box (36) 736.

THIS IS A RE-ADVERTISEMENT, PREVIOUS REPLIES HAVE BEEN LOST PLEASE SEND AGAIN.

Heartsearch

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE, professional, 48 yrs, seeks socialist male for fun, love and committment. Please write to Box (38) 835.

ASIAN MARRIAGE AND FRIENDSHIP BUREAU INTERNATIONAL welcomes non-Asians. Multiple advantage. Wider choice. DNSS, 181 Melton Road, Leicester. Phone 0533-610266.

FUN, FANTASY, FROLICS 'n' FRIENDSHIP! John seeks similarly uninhibited woman (20 - 40), open, warm, affectionate, considerate, imaginative, highly sensual, for exciting close friendship (possibly more ?). Young 40's, nonsmoker. London. Write to Box (38) 833.

Cleopatra met Clark Gable at
DRAWING DOWN THE MOON
THE THINKING PERSON'S INTRODUCTION AGENCY
01-937 8880/938 2151

TALL PROFESSIONAL BLACK MALE, 29, S.E. London, interested in music, politics, and talking, seeks tallish, good looking professional female for long-term relationship. Please write to Box (36) 739.

WANTED: Male friends for companionship. If you want the pleasure of female company without the entanglements of a heterosexual relation- ship, take the plunge and answer this ad. Please write including phone number to Box (36) 807.

EDUCATED PROFESSIONAL MAN, sense of humour, 50-65, sought by warm, petite post-graduate woman, young 50, to share most NS interests during their best years. Please write to Box (36) 808.

LOVING, ROMANTIC WOMAN 50'S, big, bright and beautiful, wants Northeastern man for companionship, caring, conversation, travel and excursions - also good times at home. Please write to Box (38) 837.

RELAXED UNATTACHED MAN (41) enjoys outdoor pursuits, wine, music, Greece, conversation, seeks attractive none-smoking female 25 - 35 with similar interests for lasting relationship. Cumbria/N. Lancs/N. Yorks area. Photograph appreciated. Please reply Box (38) 838

VEGGY AND LONESOME? Wherever you are, ring 01-348 5229 (anytime).

HAPPY INDEPENDENT WOMAN seeks warm, well-balanced, unattached man (48 - 56) to share friends, books, theatre, films, walking, travel. Tallish, non-smoking, vegetarian O.N.O. Leicestershire. Please write to Box (38) 826.

CAREER WOMAN SOUGHT (any age; preferably child-free) for marriage with partial role-reversal, by man (38) who wants to give up his office job to work from home and enjoys most housework. Willing to relocate anywhere in the U.K., but as I don't drive urban locations with access to railway preferred. Box (37) 818.

PROSPEROUS COSMOPOLITAN supertramp 50+ London. Into Arts, journeys, National Trust, orientalia, gastronomy, gardens seeks lively woman for walks, talks, travels. Replies to Box (38) 824.

OLD FRIENDS
DOES LIFE BEGIN AT 40?

MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP or COMPANIONSHIP:
the introduction agency for the 40s, 50s, & 60s
Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, N5 2DB Telephone: 01-226 5432

SKI-LOVING MALE, 52, retired professional, presentable, affable seeks like-minded amiable female for relaxing companionship now and strenuous times later in high places. Please write to Box (39) 842.

BLONDE, ATTRACTIVE FEMALE, 32 seeks non-sexist male Yorkshire/ East Lancashire. I enjoy Arts, walking, curries. Write with photo to Box (39) 843.

PROFESSIONAL MALE in unsatisfactory marriage seeks warm sensuous female for occasiona meetings, can travel. Age immaterial. Cambs. and neighbouring counties. Replies to Box (39) 844.

WIDOW, 55, attractive, amusing would like educated man, perhaps widowed, as theatre/dining companion. Interests include history, gardening, food. Please write Box (39) 845.

ATTRACTIVE, LIVELY, humorous professional lady, young forty. Interests literature, theatre, walking, cycling wishes to meet genuine warm hearted male for fun and shared adventures. Please write to Box (39) 846.

MILLIONAIRE BUSINESSMAN, 42, tall dark and elegant seeks unattached/ unmarried mother under 40 (who prefers the older man as a lover) to share his life "in the fast track" and possibly share his luxury home. Must be sensuous and presentable. Photo if possible. Telephone number essential for initial contact. Please write to Box (39) 847.

ARE YOU A SEXY LADY under 52 who fancies a somewhat younger man as a lover? Tall dark and "almost but not quite" handsome man 42, successful, rich, fun loving who has a preferance for the older lady will love to hear from you. Photo if possible. Telephone number essential for initial contact. Please reply to Box (39) 850.

OPERA-LOVING, LIVELY, attractive graduate divorcee seeks congenial male, around 50, who enjoys conversation and good food, in Oxford area. Please write Box (39) 848.

MALE UNATTACHED, 59, retired, North London, plebian tempered with some intelligence seeks mature female, executive background, esoteric interests welcomed. Confidences respected. Please reply to Box (39) 849.

WANTED - MAN, 30'S, intelligent, sociable, slim and solvent. For independent woman with similar qualifications. Aim - fun, a good time and...? Replies to Box (39) 851.

LIVELY WOMAN, early 40's more interested in personal growth than personal affluence, seeks a lively, non-smoking London-based man to share varied interests, including creative arts, music. Photo appreciated. Please write to Box (38) 829.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3096 Set by May Day
Haikus on Mrs Thatcher's visit to Japan. Entries to be in by 12 Oct.

No 3093 Set by Russell Lucas
War poetry has been much celebrated. Examples of private violence: for example muggers', vandals' or football hooligans' poetry.

Report by Ms de Meaner
The sheer bloody bone-crunching violence of some of the stuff you sent in was enough to bring my migraine on. I've yet to read war poetry which individually and lingeringly (a little too lingeringly?) details all the foul things one can do to an enemy's "goolies". Owing to the Society Editor's bid for power (up to seven pages this week!!!), the Comp has had to make do with one, sharing the space with Graffiti and the usual cast list. £12 each to the number who made it into this small area.

Tonight we have fucking-up parks. Yesterday
We had breaking windows. And tomorrow evening
We shall have damaging cars. But, tonight,
Tonight we have fucking-up parks. Rod's jeans
Are skin-tight and torn in all the right places.
Tonight we have fucking-up parks.

This is the bowling-green. And this
Is a tennis-court. Kick the turf with your Doc Martens
That is what they are for. Run the big roller
Through the nets, across the flowerbeds,
And into that shed. Rod's leather jacket
Has "OUR GANG" and a skull marked with silver studs.
Which is one thing we have all got.

These are saplings, fixed with wire and stout stakes.
You can break them easily with one pull
If you have any strength at all. Break them all.
Turn over the benches and pile them up,
They will burn easily with the petrol from the mower.
Tonight we had fucking-up parks.

John Stanley

I knew a simple lager lout
Who liked to turn a warning shout
Into a long, splenetic roar
When locked out by the force of Law.

In autumn, full of fizz and froth,
He ranted like a Visigoth,
And charged with all his shaven mates
At locked and bolted football gates.

His knuckles raw, his numskull cracked,
He fell when once he was attacked
By one who had not yet been barred
And flashed around his ID card.

You mindless mugs who pay to see
Some prat not worth his transfer fee,
Creep home, for you shall never know
The cell where youths with lager go.

Will Bellenger

Outside the ground September 6. Dear Mum,
(Shit. Bloody biro. Eh, Tony, gi's a pen.)
I'm feeling great at the minute mum.
I think we'll get in this year.
We haven't seen much of the coppers.
I'm staying well out of trouble. Food's alright.
I'm dying for one of your Sunday roasts.
(Oi, Dave, save us a drop o' that can.)
That's all I can think of at the minute.
(Eh? Alright then, don't, yer greedy bastard!
And yer can hand those fags back!)
I'll be back soon so don't worry.
The scarf's brilliant. I told you it would be.
We're trying to get some tickets now.
(CRASH! Bloody hell, that bottle just missed me.)
I've left a tenner for the housekeeping.
Hug Kirsty for me. I'm going to take her to the—
(What? Tickets? Get me one! Push through!
Dave, gi's an 'and with this 'oldall, mate.
Jesus! Me 'ead. Get 'old o' me. Eh, arrested?
No, sod the solicitor. Dave, come 'ere.
Tell me mum it wasn't my fault, mate.)

G A Tranter

When I consider how my time's been spent
In Chelmsford, or the Moor, or Wormwood Scrubs,
Or planning future jobs in East End pubs,
I often wish I'd been a yuppy gent,
A City cove who always pays the rent
And studies stocks in plushy Pall Mall clubs
Instead of casing joints and busting Chubbs
Or other crimes the Bill may well prevent.
For in that rich Square Mile you'll surely find
Far bigger villains daily there resort.
With ample pockets, that are slyly lined
From "little deals" the press do not report,
And most of them have total peace of mind—
They don't serve time who never wait in court.

C Fever

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

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Is there any point in talking to anyone else?

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